Godhead is light. Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience.

The Magazine of the Hare Krishna Movement • March/April 2004 • $4.00/£2.50

Padāyātra

Depending on Kṛṣṇa

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COVER In Alachua, Florida, local Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees join the Padayātrā America husband-and-wife team for a one-day trek. Bound for Mexico, the couple spent the winter in Florida after traveling twelve hundred miles. Please see the article beginning on page 50. (Photo by Yamarāja Dāsa.)

"So who is a brāhmaṇa? *One who knows God—he is called a* brāhmaṇa. *Therefore, the culmination of education is to understand God. That is education. Otherwise, to get education about how to nicely eat, how to nicely sleep, how to nicely have sex life, and how to defend—this education is there even in the animals."*
—p. 56

WELCOME

IN OUR LAST ISSUE, we ran the story of a group of Hare Kṛṣṇa youths touring North America by bus. This time we present a Hare Kṛṣṇa couple traversing America at a much slower pace—on a horse-drawn wagon. So far they've covered twelve hundred miles on their way to Mexico and beyond, giving out the teachings of Lord Kṛṣṇa in hundreds of towns along the way.

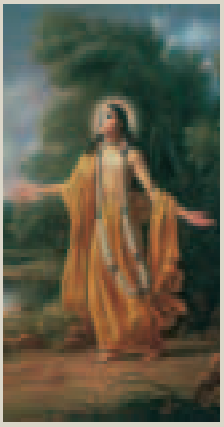
On the other side of the world, Adbhuta Hari Dāsa reports on a place where Kṛṣṇa spoke His teachings fifty centuries ago just before leaving this world. In "The Song Goes Ever On," Satyarāja Dāsa gives us a summary of those teachings and tells us about Uddhava, the intimate devotee to whom Lord Kṛṣṇa spoke them.

Kṛṣṇa's extraordinary departure from the earth is one of His many divine acts, the most endearing of which took place in Vṛndāvana, India. In "A Vṛndāvana Tour in Northern Ireland," we learn of how devotees are creating reminders of the holy sites of Vṛndāvana thousands of miles away.

This issue coincides with the anniversary of Lord Kṛṣṇa's appearance as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Amala-bhakta Dāsa relates some of Caitanya Mahāprabhu's feats in "The Wonders of Lord Caitanya."

Hare Kṛṣṇa.—*Nāgarāja Dāsa, Editor*

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead and source of all material and spiritual worlds



Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Kṛṣṇa's most recent incarnation, taught Kṛṣṇa consciousness through the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa

His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

OUR PURPOSES

- To help all people discern reality from illusion, spirit from matter, the eternal from the temporary.
- To expose the faults of materialism.
- To offer guidance in the Vedic techniques of spiritual life.
- To preserve and spread the Vedic culture.
- To celebrate the chanting of the holy names of God as taught by Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.
- To help every living being remember and serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead.

The Magazine of the Hare Krishna Movement

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(under the direction of His Divine Grace
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His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

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Letters

Encouraged by the Youth

I thoroughly enjoyed the article "Hare Kṛṣṇa Youth on Tour," in the January/February issue. Not having the good fortune of living near a temple, I have often wondered about children raised as devotees. Are they happy? Well-adjusted? It was encouraging to see that the American Hare Kṛṣṇa youth were able to experience the beauty of their country and at the same time introduce people to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Just seeing their smiling faces on the cover tells me they're special kids.

Gillian Ratliff
Via the Internet

Kindred Biker

Lord Caitanya's mercy is revealed in Toṭa Gopīnātha's biography [Jan/Feb]. I too ride a Harley for God. I have been allowed into places and situations dressed as a biker that give golden opportunities to talk about the Absolute Truth, Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. Tears of joy ran down my face as I read about Toṭa's past. Mine is not too different. I was initiated by Prabhupāda in 1974, fell down, and scratched my way back to reality.

Revatī-prāṇa-nātha Dāsa
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

Signs of Spiritual Progress

How can I know that I've improved in my devotional service?

Priya Raj
Via the Internet

OUR REPLY: Here, from Śrīla Prabhupāda's books, are several important ways we can tell if we are improving in devotional service.

In his purport to *Bhagavad-gītā* 13.8–12, Śrīla Prabhupāda writes that we can tell we are making progress if we are developing the qualities that Kṛṣṇa mentions in these verses:

"Humility; pridelessness; nonviolence; tolerance; simplicity; approaching a bona fide spiritual master; cleanliness; steadiness; self-control; renunciation of the objects of sense gratification; absence of false ego; the perception of the evil of birth, death, old age and disease; detachment; freedom from entanglement with children, wife, home and the rest; even-mindedness amid pleasant and unpleasant events; constant and unalloyed devotion to Me; aspiring to live in a solitary place; detachment from the general mass of people; accepting the importance of self-realization; and philosophical search for the Absolute Truth."

In his purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.23.29, Prabhupāda stresses detachment from sex life as an indication: "One who is advanced in devotional service is never attracted by sex life, and as soon as one becomes detached from sex life and proportionately attached to the service of the Lord, he actually experiences living in the Vaikuṇṭha [spiritual] planets."

In his purport to *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta,* Ādi-līlā 7.143, he writes, "A devotee's only attachment is Kṛṣṇa; he no longer wants to maintain his attachments to many other things."

And in his purport to *Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta,* Ādi-līlā 1.60, he writes, "Unless one gets this spiritual encouragement by following the instructions of the spiritual master, it is not possible to make advancement. Therefore, one's development of a taste for executing these instructions is the test of one's devotional service."

The Supremacy of Kṛṣṇa

Based on the four original *Vedas,* how do we find Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Godhead, outside of Śiva, besides the sayings in the *Gītā?* I have studied in the past with a Śaivite, and he states that Śiva is the supreme being. I would like some clarification on this.

Ty H. Phillips
Via the Internet

OUR REPLY: The *Nārāyaṇa Upaniṣad*

(4) says, *brahmaṇyo devakī-putraḥ:* "The son of Devakī, Kṛṣṇa, is the Supreme Personality." We also find references to the supremacy of Viṣṇu and Nārāyaṇa, plenary expansions of Kṛṣṇa. The *Ṛg Veda* (1.22.20) states, *oṁ tad viṣṇoḥ paramaṁ padaṁ sadā paśyanti surayaḥ:* "The *devas* are always looking to that supreme abode of Viṣṇu." The *Nārāyaṇa Upaniṣad* (1) says, "From Nārāyaṇa are born the seven Rudras [forms of Śiva]." And the *Mahā Upaniṣad* (1) states, "In the beginning of creation there was only the Supreme Personality Nārāyaṇa. There was no Brahmā, no Śiva. . . ."

Prabhupāda wrote in a letter to a disciple: "Śaṅkarācārya is a Lord Śiva worshiper and an incarnation of Lord Śiva, and he admits that Nārāyaṇa is the master and Nārāyaṇa is the Supreme. [Śaṅkarācārya writes:] *Nārāyaṇaḥ paro 'vyaktāt* ["Nārāyaṇa existed before anything else was manifest"]. This is the best authority. What more evidence do you want? This is in his *Śaṅka Bhāṣya* [commentary] on *Bhagavad-gītā.* This is not even the statement of the *Purāṇas* but of Śankarācārya's own writings. How can you deny if the incarnation of Lord Śiva says that Kṛṣṇa is Supreme?"

Why No Eggs?

I understand that you Hare Kṛṣṇas are vegetarians because you don't want to be responsible for animal slaughter, but why are you prohibited from eating eggs?

Jake Crosley
Via the Internet

SATYARĀJA DĀSA REPLIES: The most important reason we don't eat eggs is the same reason we don't eat meat or fish: We eat only Kṛṣṇa *prasādam,* food first offered to Kṛṣṇa in love and devotion. And in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.26) and other places, Kṛṣṇa tells us that He wants only vegetarian food, including milk products.

Kṛṣṇa's diet has the benefit of being nonviolent, which is important to devotees, and which vegetarians can also appreciate. When it comes to eggs, however, it can be argued that no violence results from eating them. So why refrain from eating eggs?

First of all, to eat an egg you must first torture a chicken—the two are inextricably related. The modern factory farm is a veritable concentration camp, with horrors better left unmentioned in the pages of this magazine.

Commercially produced eggs (for eating) do not require male chickens; they are the unnatural product of biological manipulation. Thus, they are often referred to as "vegetarian eggs." But make no mistake—eggs can never be vegetarian. In the first place, they do not grow on trees. Secondly, the ovum, even in factory-produced eggs, remains in the center. This means that the eggs people eat contain living cells with all the processes of metabolism, such as respiration, digestion, and so on. The fifteen thousand pores on the eggshell alone are used to inhale oxygen and exhale carbon dioxide and water vapor. What does all this mean? If that same unfertilized ovum were to encounter sperm, it could become a fertilized egg—and then a chicken. As strange as it sounds, what we are really talking about here is the eating of a chicken's daily menstrual secretion.

In the *Bhagavad-gītā,* Lord Kṛṣṇa categorizes foods according to their effect on the consciousness. Eggs belong in the category of foods that drag the consciousness toward darkness and ignorance—something that persons on the spiritual path would do well to avoid.

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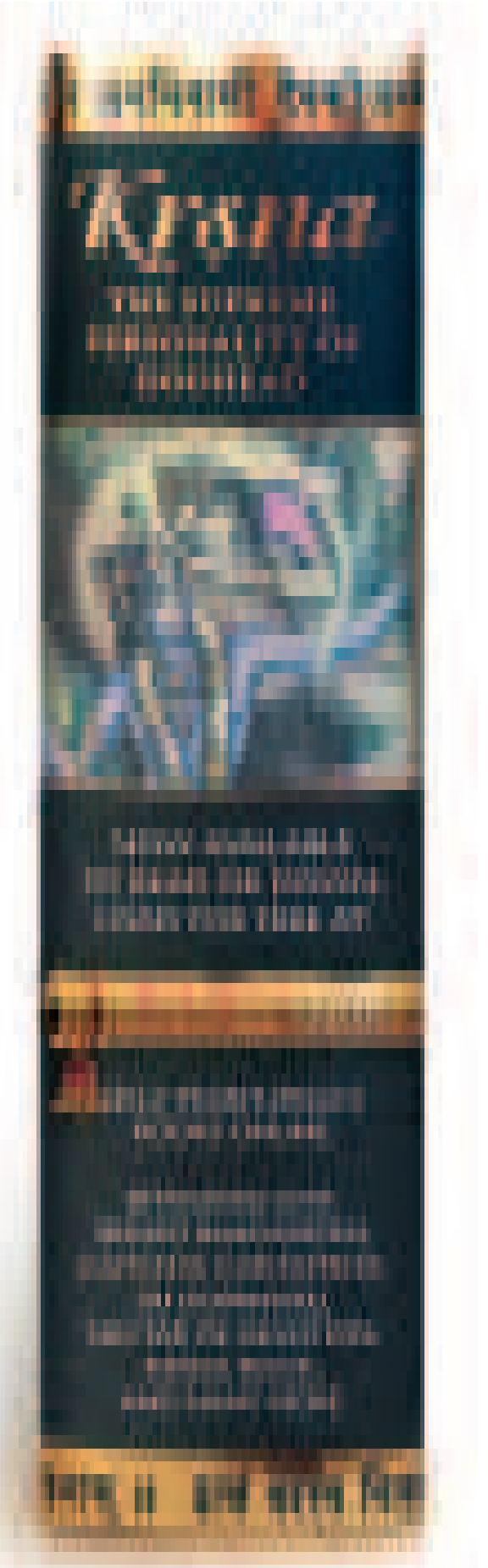

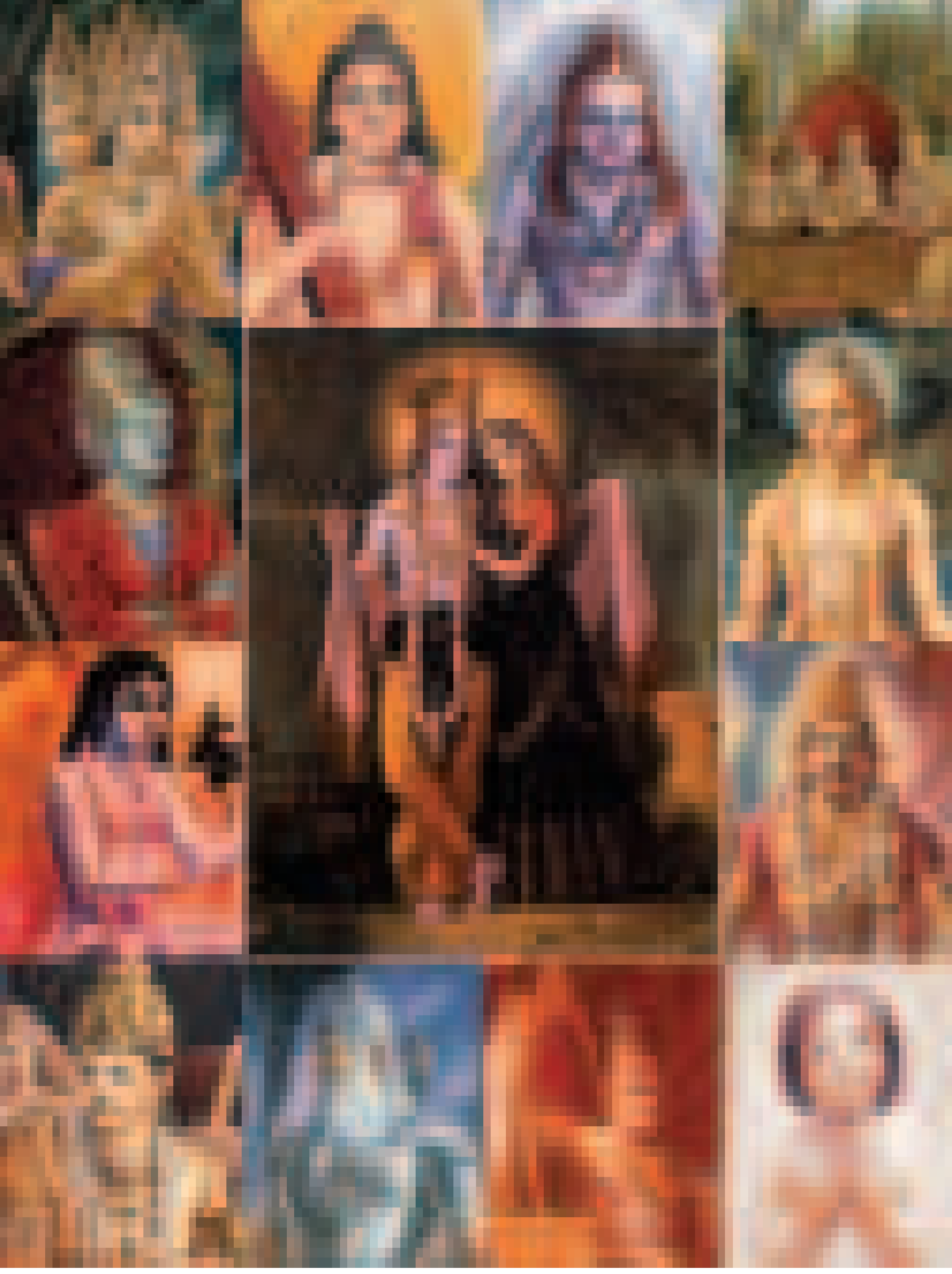

HOW TO RECEIVE KṚṢṆA'S

Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself sets up the system by which His teachings find their way to us.

by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda
Founder-*Ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

śrī-prahrāda uvāca
kaumāra ācaret prājño
dharmān bhāgavatān iha
durlabhaṁ mānuṣaṁ janma
tad apy adhruvam arthadam

PRAHLĀDA MAHĀRĀJA SAID: One who is sufficiently intelligent should use the human form of body from the very beginning of life—in other words, from the tender age of childhood—to practice the activities of devotional service, giving up all other engagements. The human body is most rarely achieved, and although temporary like other bodies, it is meaningful because in human life one can perform devotional service. Even a slight amount of sincere devotional service can give one complete perfection.
—*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.6.1

Today I shall explain the importance of Kṛṣṇa consciousness as it was conceived by one of the greatest devotees in this disciplic succession. You know we are under disciplic succession. We do not manufacture anything by mental concoction. We do not approve that method. We receive knowledge from the authorities, and out of many such *ācāryas,* or authorities, who have appeared and disappeared, Prahlāda Mahārāja is one.

We don't say "born" and "died," but "appear" and "disappear." This is the explanation: None of us, neither Kṛṣṇa nor we living entities, are born or die; we appear and disappear. In the *Bhagavad-gītā,* Lord Kṛṣṇa says on the battlefield, "My dear Arjuna, don't think that you or Me or all the kings and soldiers who have assembled on this battlefield did not exist in the past and will not exist in the future." That means

The twelve mahājanas *(clockwise from top, left): Brahmā, Nārada, Śiva, the Kumāras, Kapila, Manu, Prahlāda, Janaka, Bhīṣma, Bali, Śukadeva, and Yamarāja.*

Just as one changes his dress, when the present body is unworkable he changes to a new body.

• • • •

they existed in the past and they're existing at present and they would exist also in the future. That means we are all eternal.

The body is changing, and the final change, when you transmigrate from one body to another, is called death. But actually, there is no death. *Na jāyate na mriyate vā kadācit* [Bg. 2.20]. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* you'll find that the living entity is never born and never dies. *Na hanyate hanyamāne śarīre.* One may say, "I see that he is dying." But he is not dying; he is finishing this present body.

An example is given: *vāsāṁsi jīrṇāni yathā vihāya* [Bg. 2.22]. Just as one changes his dress, when the present body is unworkable he changes to a new body. When the eyes cannot see, there is blindness. Similarly, when the hand cannot work, the leg cannot work, the tongue cannot work—because at the last stage these mechanical arrangements of this body will stop functioning—that is called death. Try to understand: If I cannot see, that does not mean I am dead. Similarly, when the senses of the body cannot function, that also does not mean that I am dead. This is to be understood with a little intelligence and a cool head.

Prahlāda Mahārāja, a great devotee, is in the line of disciplic succession. He's considered one of the great *ācāryas,* authorities. Who is an *ācārya*? An *ācārya* is one who knows the intricacies of Vedic knowledge, behaves in terms of that knowledge, and teaches his disciple in terms of that knowledge. The word *ācārya* means a person whose behavior is to be followed—we don't just follow someone according to our taste—and that *ācārya* comes in the standard disciplic succession.

Twelve Great Authorities

We are discussing the instructions of Prahlāda Mahārāja because he happens to be one of the stalwart *ācāryas.* The names of such authorized *ācāryas* are mentioned in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.* Who are they? *Svayambhūr nāradaḥ śambhuḥ . . .* [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.3.20]. *Svayambhuḥ* means Brahmā. Brahmā is born without any material father and mother. Therefore he is called *svayambhuḥ,* "self-manifested." He is the only living creature within this universe born without a father and mother. That means without a material father and mother. But he has his father. His father is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Nārāyaṇa. Brahmā is born out of the lotus flower grown from the abdomen of Nārāyaṇa. Therefore he's called *svayambhuḥ.* Before him there was no existence of material creation.

Next is Nārada. Nārada is born from Brahmā. Then Śambhu, who is also born of Brahmā. Śambhu is Lord Śiva. He is also one of the *ācāryas.*

Next are the Kumāras, who are also sons of Brahmā. The word *kumāra* means *brahmacārī,* celibate. When they were born, Brahmā wanted to create living entities to fill the universe, so he wanted many sons and grandsons.

Brahmā requested his four Kumāra sons, "My dear boys, get yourself married and increase the population."

But the Kumāras said, "My dear father, we are not going to marry. We are not going to be entangled in this material way of life. We shall remain as *brahmacārīs* and cultivate Kṛṣṇa consciousness."

Oh, the father was very angry.

"Oh, you are refusing my order?"

From his anger Lord Śiva was born. Lord Śiva's name is also Rudra because he was crying (*rudra*) from the very beginning of his birth. He too is one of the authorities.

Kapila, another *ācārya,* is the son of Devahūti, and He's considered an incarnation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Next is Manu, the father of the mankind. From *manuḥ,* the word "man" is derived.

Now Prahlāda's name comes. Then Janaka, the great king whose daughter, Sītā, was married to Lord Rāmacandra. Therefore, Sītā's name is also Jānakī, "the daughter of Mahārāja Janaka." He is also a great authority.

Then Bhīṣma. You have heard the name of Bhīṣma, the grandfather of Arjuna. He is also one of the authorities.

Then Mahārāja Bali, a king. He was a grandson of Prahlāda Mahārāja. All these persons became authorities by their exemplary character for advancing in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Therefore they are considered authorities.

Next is *vaiyāsakiḥ,* which means "the son of Vyāsadeva," or Śukadeva Gosvāmī. He's also an authority. And the verse ends with the word *vayam,* "we," meaning Yamarāja, the controller of sinful activities and the speaker of the verse. He is like the superintendent of police, appointed by Kṛṣṇa. He is also one of the authorities. How can you deny the superintendent of police as an authority? As the superintendent of police is an authority in the state, so Yamarāja is an authority.

An Atheist's Saintly Son

Today we are speaking about the instructions of one of the authorities, Prahlāda Mahārāja. What is the history of Prahlāda Mahārāja? He was born in the family of a great atheist. His father was a great atheist, Hiraṇyakaśipu. *Hiraṇya* means gold, and *kaśipu* means enjoyment in soft bedding. He was concerned with two things: money and sense enjoyment. That was his business, and he wanted to train his boy in that way. But fortunately, the boy happened to be a great devotee by the instruction of Nārada. He was born in the family of atheists—his father was a great atheist. But because he was blessed by a great devotee, Nārada, he became a

great devotee.

Now, Prahlāda took the opportunity of spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Where? In his school. He was a five-year-old boy, and as soon as he would get the opportunity, he would spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness to his classmates. That was his business.

And so, many times Prahlāda Mahārāja's father called in the teachers: "What education are you giving to my child? Why he is chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa? [*Laughter.*] Why are you spoiling my boy?" [*Laughter.*]

You see? So don't think that I am spoiling these boys and girls by teaching them Hare Kṛṣṇa.

So the teacher said, "My dear sir, I teach your son very nicely about politics, economics, and, as you want, to become a very clever man in the material world. But unfortunately I do not know wherefrom your son has learned this Hare Kṛṣṇa. So please excuse me. I am trying to make your son forget this nonsense Hare Kṛṣṇa, but I do not know how. By nature, he chants Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, and not only is he spoiling himself, but he's spoiling my whole school. [*Laughter.*] Because as soon as he chants Hare Kṛṣṇa, all the boys join with him, and they clap and they dance. So this is going on."

The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Succession

Now, this edition of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* here on the table is a great, grand edition. Each verse contains eight commentaries by great stalwart devotees. They represent different disciplic successions of devotees. There are four authorized disciplic successions. As I have already mentioned, Brahmā is one of the authorities. He has a disciplic succession: from Brahmā to Nārada, from Nārada to Vyāsadeva, from Vyāsadeva to Madhvācārya, from Madhvācārya to—I am making a short-cut—Mādhavendra Purī, from Mādhavendra Purī to Īśvara Purī, from Īśvara Purī to Lord Caitanya, from Lord Caitanya to Svarūpa Dāmodara, from Svarūpa Dāmodara to the six Gosvāmīs, from the six Gosvāmīs to Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, the author of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta,* and from him to Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura, from Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura to Viśvanātha Cakravartī, from Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura to Jagannātha Dāsa Bābājī, from Jagannātha Dāsa Bābājī to Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, from Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura to Gaurakiśora Dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja, and from Gaurakiśora Dāsa Bābājī to my spiritual master. And then we are descended.

In this way, the disciplic succession is coming. What is the significance of the disciplic succession? If you receive knowledge from the descendants of these authorities, then you get perfect knowledge. Perfect knowledge is imparted by the supreme perfect, God, and it is received by Brahmā. And the same knowledge is handed over to Nārada. Nārada hands it over to Vyāsadeva, Vyāsadeva hands it over to Madhvācārya, and so on. If a ripe fruit on the top of the tree falls down all of a sudden, it is destroyed. But if it is handed over from up to down, down, down, then it comes as it is, and you can enjoy the undamaged fruit. Similarly, when knowledge is handed down by disciplic succession, then you can enjoy the reality.

That is confirmed in the *Bhagavad-gītā.* In the fourth chapter you'll find that Kṛṣṇa says, *imaṁ vivasvate yogaṁ proktavān aham avyayam* [Bg. 4.1]. "First of all, I spoke this yoga system to Vivasvān." Vivasvān is the name of the controlling deity in the sun planet. As we have got many presidents, each higher planet has a president. According to Vedic language, they are known as the moon-god or the sun-god or Varuṇa, and so on. You also can occupy such posts if you become qualified. Just as you can become the President, you can also occupy the predominating post in the sun planet, in the moon planet, and in all the other planets. That is also confirmed in the *Bhagavad-gītā* [7.23]: *devān deva-yajo yānti.* Anyone who aspires to be elevated to the planetary system inhabited by the demigods can go there.

So Kṛṣṇa says, "First of all, I narrated this yoga system to Vivasvān." Vivasvān is the predominating deity of the sun. He was taught the *Bhagavad-gītā.* And Kṛṣṇa says, *vivasvān manave prāha:* "And Vivasvān, this gentleman, (*please turn to page 57*)

What Is the Hare Kṛsna Movement?

Founded in 1966 by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) carries on a great ancient tradition rooted in the *Bhagavad-gītā,* the teachings Lord Kṛṣṇa spoke five millenniums ago. The *Gītā* and the other Vedic scriptures declare Kṛṣṇa to be the original person, God Himself, who appears periodically in this world to liberate all living beings.

Only five hundred years ago, Kṛṣṇa descended as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to teach the most sublime and effective means of meditation for the present day: the chanting of the names of God, especially as found in the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra.

Today members of ISKCON continue Lord Caitanya's movement by distributing the teachings of Lord Kṛṣṇa and the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra all over the world.

Pronunciation

We spell Sanskrit words and names by a phonetic system that lets you know how to say each word. Pronounce short **a** like the **u** in b**u**t, long **ā** like the **a** in f**a**r (and held twice as long as the short **a**). Pronounce **e** like the **a** in ev**a**de, long **ī** like the **i** in p**i**que. Pronounce the vowel **ṛ** like the **ri** in **ri**m, and **c** like the **ch** in **ch**air. Pronounce consonants like **ch, jh,** and **dh** as in staun**ch-h**eart, hed**ge-h**og, and re**d-h**ot. Pronounce **ś** and **ṣ** like **sh.** So for *Kṛṣṇa* say KRISHNA, for *Caitanya* say CHAITANYA.

Spiritual Names

ISKCON members receive names of Lord Kṛṣṇa or His great devotees, combined with Dāsa, for men, or Dāsī, for women, both of which mean "servant." For instance, the

THE TRUE MEANING AND GLORIES OF THE

We risk disrespecting God when we underestimate the spiritual power of chanting His names.

by Ūrmilā Devī Dāsī

This is the fourth in a series of articles on offenses to be avoided when trying to progress spiritually by chanting God's names. This article discusses the offenses of considering the holy name a mundane auspicious ritual, giving the holy name an imaginary meaning, and thinking that the glories of the holy name are exaggerated.

"SHE HAS between two and twenty- four hours left."

My mother's breathing had become labored, and she could no longer give that tiny nod or shake of head to indicate her desires.

So, it had come. Unable to speak, my mother had written "When?" once or twice in her many weeks without any sustenance but water. Now I immediately thought of rituals of protection—marking her body with sacred clay, putting beads of *tulasī* wood on her, and so on. But that was not to be.

"No Kṛṣṇa rituals," my cousin the doctor admonished me. Although not her attending physician, being a doctor he had more or less taken charge of things. "Your mother was not a Hare Kṛṣṇa. Let her die as she lived."

"But," I argued, "these last weeks I've been chanting to her, reading stories to her from our scriptures, singing devotional songs. She often asked me to, and really loved it. Why should I do something different today?"

I was hopeful, yet nervous. For two weeks now I'd been with my mother twelve hours or more a day. The first week my muscles gradually became intensely strained, as I was on constant full alert, trying to notice when death would come so I could help her remember Kṛṣṇa. Finally I understood: If I told my mother to surrender to Kṛṣṇa, I had to do the same. The time and circumstances of her death were not in my hands. I couldn't be with her every moment, controlling the situation. Hadn't her roommate here in the nursing home, apparently in reasonably good condition, died unexpectedly

The holy name comes directly from the most intimate, sacred realm of the Supreme: Goloka Vṛndāvana, Kṛṣṇa's abode in the spiritual world.

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from a heart attack practically in this very room just days ago? At that moment, I'd been at the nurses' station. Would I be there when my mother's death came?

"No Kṛṣṇa rituals," he repeated.

I sighed and then looked directly into his eyes and shook his hand.

"No rituals," I said, "and that's a promise."

Keeping that promise, I again read my mother the story of how Kṛṣṇa married Rukmiṇī. Then I chanted out loud on my beads, "Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare."

My mother's private aide, who had worked as a registered nurse in South America, was an educated, intelligent woman with a sweet simple faith in God and Jesus.

When she heard my chanting, she said with a conspiratorial glance, "Your cousin is still in the building."

When he returned to the room sometime later, I quickly put down my beads, but though he saw and heard me chanting, he didn't complain. Did he understand that chanting the holy name is not a religious ritual, what to speak of a sectarian one?

Purity Without Rituals

Because Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord, is the summit and definition of purity, no one can achieve His direct service without also being pure. All the genuine scriptures and religious traditions of the world, therefore, have rituals and processes for bringing a human being to a level of purity where love of God becomes possible. But the holy name itself has the power to create purity without the need of rituals.

Unfortunately, transcendent spiritual practices such as chanting God's names can be mistaken for rituals or become transformed into external, meaningless traditions over time. Therefore, many people assume that the chanting of Kṛṣṇa's names, as in Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare, is the formal procedure of a particular religious sect, meant for gaining worldly happiness, power over the body and mind, or salvation. Such thinking is an offense to the name. Similar offenses are to give a material interpretation of the holy name and to think that the spiritual glories attributed to the name are exaggerations or mythology. If we offend the name in these ways, Kṛṣṇa will hide His name's true meaning and blessings from us. The result will be sorrow, rather than the awakening of our love for Kṛṣṇa.

There are reasons why we might be confused about the transcendental nature of Kṛṣṇa's name. For example, the scriptures promise material rewards or liberation to one who chants the holy name. And there are standard procedures—apparently rituals—for chanting the Lord's name, such as taking a vow to chant a certain number of names a day and using beads as an aid to meditation.

Kṛṣṇa's name, however, is Kṛṣṇa Himself incarnated as sound. The holy name comes directly from the most intimate, sacred realm of the Supreme: Goloka Vṛndāvana, Kṛṣṇa's abode in the spiritual world. The holy name is Kṛṣṇa entering our hearts and rising to dance on our tongues. But just as computer novices know only a few elementary functions, beginners in spiritual science may not appreciate who the name is and how the name is within their mouth. In other words, beginners might not understand that the holy name has unlimited power.

Kṛṣṇa has invested the holy name with all energies, so chanting gives one access to all energies, including the spiritual. In contrast, a person who performs mundane, karmic activities, or pious acts meant to obtain wealth, health, and other things of this world, contacts only material energies. And meditation, contemplation, and philosophical endeavors connect one only with energies for salvation, sometimes called *brahma-nirvāṇa.* Therefore, we offend the name if we think chanting to be only as potent as activities of piety and salvation.

It is true that sometimes working piously (karma) or for liberation (through *jñāna*) helps create a situation conducive to chanting the holy name. Yet the difference between these activities and chanting can be further explained as follows. Actions for piety or salvation are means to an end. They're eventually abandoned and are always less than pure. Chanting the holy name, however, is both the principal means to attain love of God and the main activity one performs once one attains that love. The holy name is never impure; the purity and glories of the name become uncovered as the chanter's purity increases. A person who understands these points about the holy name rejects karma and *jñāna* and takes solely to *bhakti*, which centers on chanting.

Works and Faith

Critics of chanting who see it as a ritual say that God and His service are unattainable through our own effort, including chanting. Like austerities, study, and other "works" (to use the biblical term), chanting can't force God to accept us. We would agree with that—at least in the sense of mechanical chanting. Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, "Revival of the dormant affection or love of Godhead does not depend on the mechanical system of hearing

and chanting, but it solely and wholly depends on the causeless mercy of the Lord. When the Lord is fully satisfied with the sincere efforts of the devotee, He may endow him with His loving transcendental service." (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.7.6, Purport)

What are those "sincere efforts" that attract the grace of Kṛṣṇa? They are our efforts to grab Kṛṣṇa's merciful love when offered. The externals of genuine systems of spiritual life and religion, such as taking up a regime of chanting, are meant to display our sincerity to Kṛṣṇa so that He will be inclined to reveal Himself to us.

There is thus a symbiosis between "works" and "faith" (citing the biblical terms again). But ordinary pious or philanthropic works do not attract Kṛṣṇa's attention, although they can be helpful to bring a soul to a life of self-realization. Only work in devotion, in direct service to the Lord and saintly persons, brings Kṛṣṇa's notice.

In fact, ultimately nothing but the mercy of the Lord will bring us to our original state of spiritual happiness. The main way to show our desire for this mercy is to connect with Kṛṣṇa's names, especially by chanting the *mahā-mantra:* Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

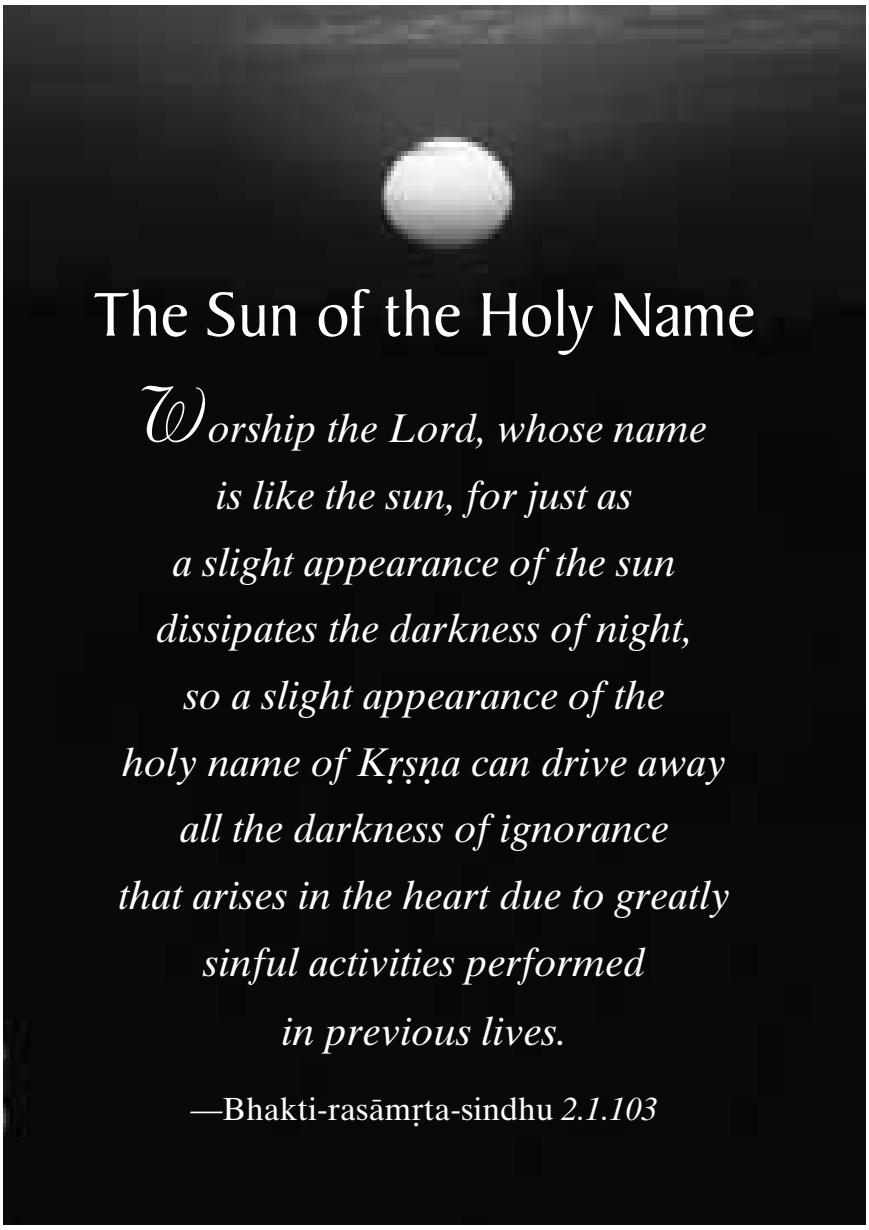
But what of those material benefits promised to the chanter? They're true, and not held up as merely glittering trinkets to attract our attention and get our motivation churning. Yet Kṛṣṇa's devotee may not achieve such benefits. Why? Because the devotee doesn't ask for those small and tasteless fruits, having attained the juicy sweet nectar of Kṛṣṇa's love.

The scriptures also describe examples of immediate tremendous spiritual realization and purification through chanting and other transcendent services of devotion. Because such results are uncommon, however, one might think the scriptures exaggerate the benefits of chanting. But the benefits are real. It's just a matter of when and how a person experiences the name's glories, and that depends on Kṛṣṇa's mercy and the chanter's careful avoidance of offenses.

Why Chanting Gives Happiness

Some people think that positive changes in one who chants the holy names result from the mechanics of chanting rather than from a spiritual transformation. For example, a prominent American newsmagazine recently ran a cover article about how all "religious experience" can be attributed to the brain's neurological functions. In other words, some scientists claim that the physical act of chanting changes brain chemistry and such alterations cause what is then termed spiritual happiness or realization. But scriptures and saints tell us that transcendent pleasure and understanding cause positive changes in the body and mind, some of which may be measured in brain chemistry. It is reasonable that the love of someone enraptured by Kṛṣṇa would affect the body in which he or she resides, just as a party in a house would vibrate the walls and floors. To state that the floors' vibrations caused the joyous mood of the revelers would be illogical.

The holy name has the potency to transform someone from illusioned to enlightened because the name is Kṛṣṇa Himself and in the form of the *mahā-mantra*—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, (*please turn to*


The Sun of the Holy Name
Worship the Lord, whose name
is like the sun, for just as
a slight appearance of the sun
dissipates the darkness of night,
so a slight appearance of the
holy name of Kṛṣṇa can drive away
all the darkness of ignorance
that arises in the heart due to greatly
sinful activities performed
in previous lives.
—Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 2.1.103

The Wonders Of Lord Caitanya

During His presence on earth about five hundred years ago, Lord Kṛṣṇa's most recent incarnation often displayed His divine powers.

by Amala-bhakta Dāsa

This is the second of three articles describing the miraculous events in the life of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. The information herein comes from Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta *and* Śrī Caitanya-Bhāgavata.

SOON AFTER LORD Caitanya began His movement for chanting the holy name of the Lord (*saṅkīrtana*), many of His followers would sing, dance, and play musical instruments for many hours in glorification of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Some envious *brāhmaṇas* resented the Lord's increasing power and influence over the people and decided to try to check Him at any cost.

These *brāhmaṇas* complained to the Moslem Kazi, or governor, that Lord Caitanya's movement was sinful and would result in Navadvipa's becoming deserted. Many Moslems also complained, but mainly about the resounding noise of the *saṅkīrtana.* All the faultfinders urged the Kazi to banish the Lord from the city.

These reports greatly angered the Kazi. So one evening, entering a home in which *saṅkīrtana* was in progress, the Kazi broke a devotee's drum. He then banned all *saṅkīrtana* and threatened serious punishment to anyone who violated his order. Shocked and disheartened, the devotees informed Lord Caitanya, who then organized a massive civil disobedience march consisting of hundreds of thousands of devotees engaged in a thunderous *saṅkīrtana*.

When the demonstration reached the Kazi's residence, Lord Caitanya conversed with him on several issues, and the governor revealed an amazing experience he'd had.

"On the evening I broke the drum and forbade any further *saṅkīrtana,*" the Kazi said, "I had a horrifying dream. I saw a dreadful creature with a human body and a lion's face roaring loudly. He jumped on my chest and savagely laughed at me. Placing His nails on my chest, He said in a grim voice, 'I shall tear your chest apart the way you broke the drum! You have forbidden the performance of My congregational chanting; therefore I must kill you.'

"Horribly afraid, I shut my eyes and trembled. Then the man-lion said, 'I have conquered you just to teach you a lesson. But I will be merciful to you because on that day you did not create a big disturbance. So I have forgiven you and not killed you. But if you do that again, I will destroy you, your entire family, and all the meat-eaters [the Moslems].'

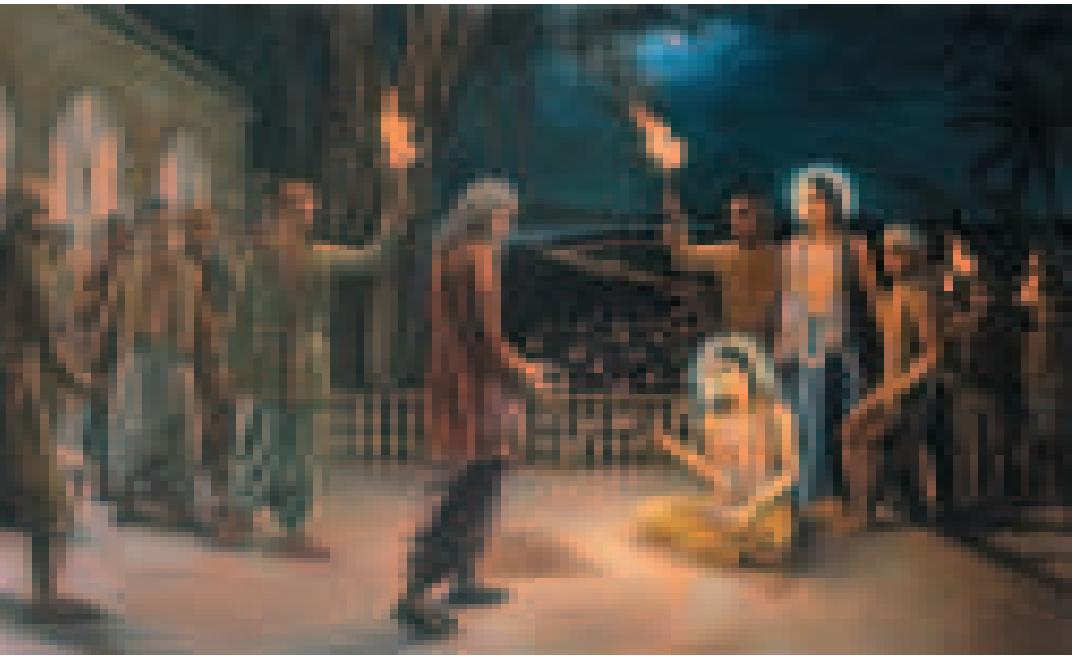
"After the man-lion said this, He left. I would like you to see the scratches He made over my heart."

The Kazi then revealed his chest, and as the people there saw the scratches, they were astonished. Everyone realized that Lord Nṛsiṁha, the half-man, half-lion incarnation of God, who had appeared long ago to kill the demon Hiraṇyakaśipu and protect His devotee Prahlāda, had again appeared for a similar purpose. But what most people did not know was that Lord Caitanya Himself was also Lord Nṛsiṁha—and thus His *saṅkīrtana* mission could not be checked.

The Kazi then revealed something equally ex-

Right: Lord Caitanya cures the leprosy of the devotee Vāsudeva, who showed unparalleled compassion to all living beings, even to the worms that lived by eating the sores on his body.

Painting by Yadurāṇī Devi Dāsī



traordinary.

On the same day that he had dreamed about Lord Nṛsiṁha, one of his soldiers said, "When I went to stop the congregational chanting, suddenly flames struck my face. My beard was burned and there were blisters on my cheeks."

Every other orderly who had tried to check the devotees' *saṅkīrtana* reported a similar experience.

But even more remarkable was that some of the complaining Moslems, after hearing the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra, began to uncontrollably chant it, even though they had no desire to.

When the conversation ended, the Kazi said to Lord Caitanya, "To all my future descendants, I give this solemn order: No one should ever stop the *saṅkīrtana* movement."

His descendants have respectfully honored those words.

The Lord Revives a Child

One night at Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura's house, Lord Caitanya, along with His devotees, was deeply absorbed in *saṅkīrtana.* During the festival, Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura was informed that one of his sons, who had been seriously ill, had just died. To avoid disturbing Lord Caitanya and His devotees, Śrīvāsa forbade his family members from expressing their sorrow and grief at that time. Thus, the blissful chanting and dancing continued without tearful interruptions.

But when the *saṅkīrtana* ended, the omniscient Lord Caitanya said, "There must have been some calamity in this house."

He was then told about the death of Śrīvāsa's son.

"Why wasn't this news given to Me earlier?" He sorrowfully asked.

Then He went to the deceased body and said, "My dear boy, why are you leaving Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura's house?"

The soul of the dead boy re-entered the body and replied, "I've lived here for as long as I was destined to. That time is now over. So I'm going someplace else now—to wherever You're sending me. I'm Your eternal servant, a living being who depends on You. I must act only in harmony with Your wish. I can't do anything else. I have no such power."

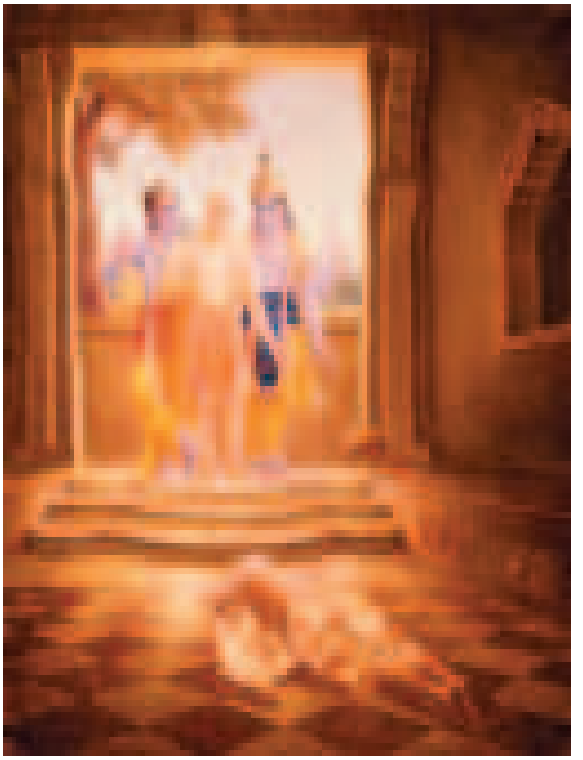
Hearing these words, all the members of Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura's family received transcendental knowledge and felt happily assured. Thus, they felt no reason to lament or grieve anymore.

The Lord Reveals Himself

One day, in Jagannatha Puri, Lord Caitanya had a philosophical discussion with the famous scholar Sārvabauma Bhaṭṭācārya.

After the Lord defeated him on every point, Sārvabauma Bhaṭṭācārya thought, "Lord Caitanya is certainly Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself. Because I could not understand Him and was very proud of my learning, I have committed many offenses."

When Sārvabauma denounced himself as an offender and took shelter of Lord Caitanya, the Lord wanted to show him His mercy, so He



manifested His four-armed Viṣṇu form. Then, just after this, He manifested His original two-armed Kṛṣṇa form, with a blackish complexion and a flute near His lips.

When Sārvabauma Bhaṭṭācārya saw this, he prostrated himself before the Lord. Then he arose and with folded palms offered Lord Caitanya prayers of glorification. By the Lord's mercy, all truths were revealed to him, and he could understand the importance of chanting God's holy names and distributing love of God everywhere.

From that time on, Sārvabauma did not know anything but reverence for the feet of Lord Caitanya. And all his explanations of the revealed scriptures were in strict accordance with the process of devotional service.

Calling the Ganges

One day Lord Caitanya, who always enjoyed Paramānanda Purī Gosvāmī's company, asked him, "How is the water in your well?"

"The well is bad, so the water is horrible. It's very muddy."

Lord Caitanya raised both His arms and prayed, "O Lord Jagannātha, O great Lord of the universe, please grant Me this blessing. Please make the pure Ganges River flow into this well."

Lord Caitanya then went home, and the devotees went to sleep.

Goddess Gaṅgā took the Lord's order on her head and filled the well.

When the devotees arose the next morning and saw the well filled with pure, clear water, they glorified the Lord by shouting His name. And when Paramānanda Purī saw it, he fainted with joy.

Everyone said that Goddess Gaṅgā had entered the well, so they circled it a few times out of deep respect for her.

Then Lord Caitanya arrived there, looked at the water, and said, "Devotees, please listen. Whoever drinks this water or bathes in it achieves the same result as dipping into the Ganges. The sinful reactions he created in the past will never manifest—for they will be eradicated. And he will achieve pure love and devotion for Lord Kṛṣṇa."

All the devotes fully appreciated this and cried out, "Hari!" one of the Lord's holy names.

Healing a Devotee Leper

In South India an enlightened *brāhmaṇa* named Vāsudeva was afflicted by leprosy. He was so compassionate toward other living beings that as soon as a worm would fall from a sore on his body, he would retrieve it and replace it on the spot from where it had fallen. Vāsudeva believed he deserved to suffer for sinful deeds he had committed in the past.

When Vāsudeva heard about Lord Caitanya's arrival in his village, he went to visit Him. But when he reached the house at which the Lord had been staying, he learned that the Lord had already departed. Hearing this, he became so overwhelmed by anguish that he fell down unconscious.

When Vāsudeva regained consciousness and sorrowed over not having seen the Lord, Lord Caitanya, knowing His devotee's heart, at once returned to that area and embraced him. And just by the Lord's touching Vāsudeva, both his leprosy and his distress vanished. Indeed, to Vāsudeva's great joy, his body became quite handsome. Out of appreciation and respect, Vāsudeva touched Lord Caitanya's feet and said, "O my merciful Lord, such mercy is not possible for ordinary living entities. Only in You can such mercy be found. When sinful persons would see me, they would walk away because of my bad bodily odor. Yet you have touched me. Such is the independent nature of the Lord."

Meek and humble, Vāsudeva worried that he would become falsely proud over his being healed by Lord Caitanya. So to protect him, the Lord counseled him to chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra ceaselessly and to deliver people from their miseries by teaching about Lord Kṛṣṇa. By doing these things, the Lord assured him, he would never become falsely proud.

(*please turn to page 40***)**

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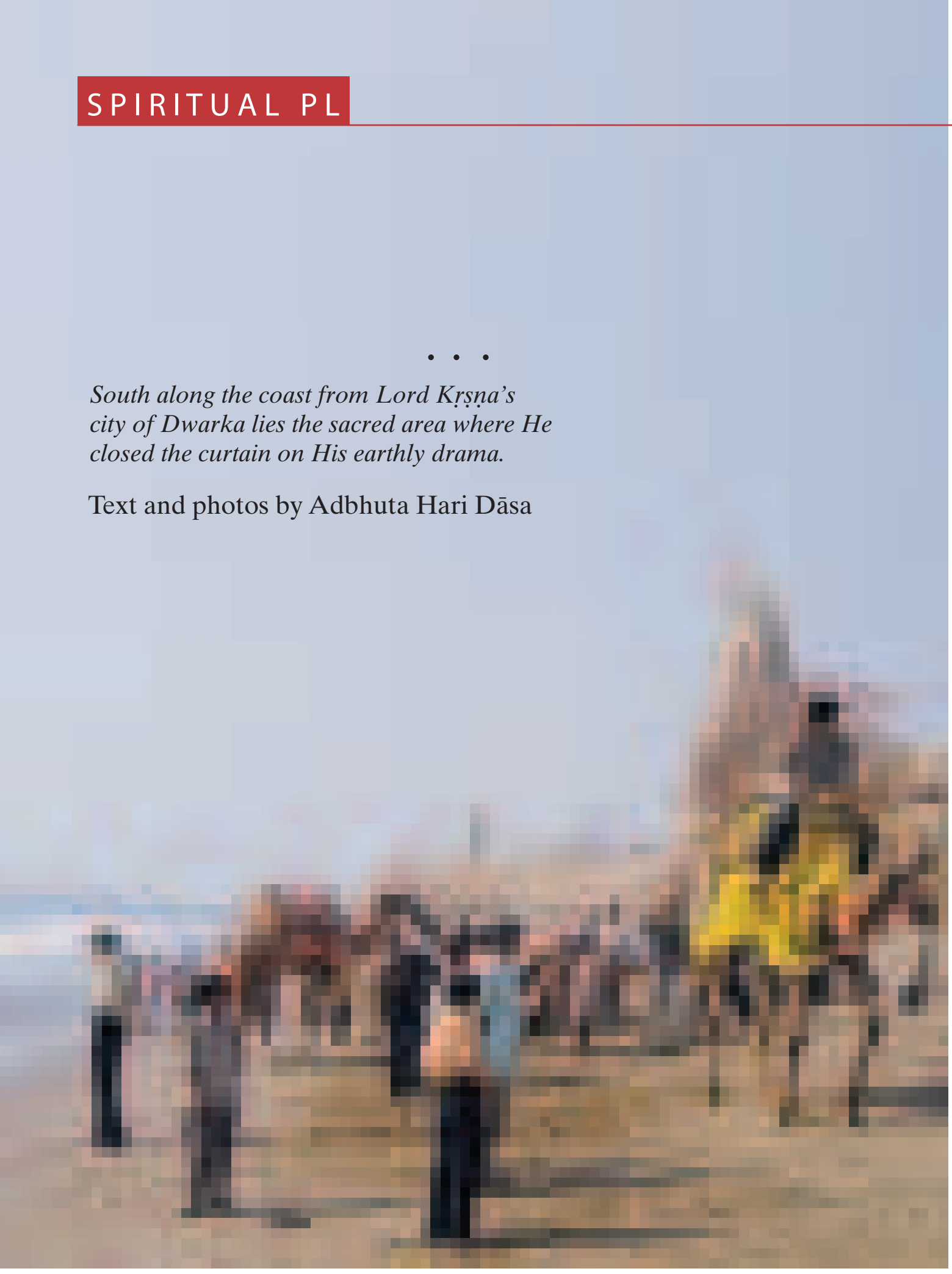
South along the coast from Lord Kṛṣṇa's city of Dwarka lies the sacred area where He closed the curtain on His earthly drama.

Text and photos by Adbhuta Hari Dāsa



THE CITY OF Somnath lies on the west coast of India, in the state of Gujarat. The area was formerly called Prabhāsa, and it was here that Lord Kṛṣṇa arranged for the members of His dynasty to leave this world, on the pretext of killing one another in a great battle.

The main temple at Somnath is that of Lord Śiva as Someśvara, "the lord of Soma, the moon-god." (Somnath, from *soma-nātha,* means the same thing.) At the entrance to the temple, I was welcomed not by priests but by four police officers, stationed there because of recent terrorist attacks in Gujarat. I encouraged them by telling them that by protecting the temple they were performing the real duty of the *kṣatriya,* or administrative, class.

As is common in Śiva temples, the deity is a Śiva-liṅga, a phallic representation of Śiva as the original progenitor. According to the *Śiva Purāṇa* and *Nandi Upa-Purāṇa,* Lord Śiva is especially present on earth in twelve places. The Śiva-liṅgas in these places are known as Jyotir-liṅgas ("*liṅgas* of light"), and the foremost of these is Someśvara at Somnath.

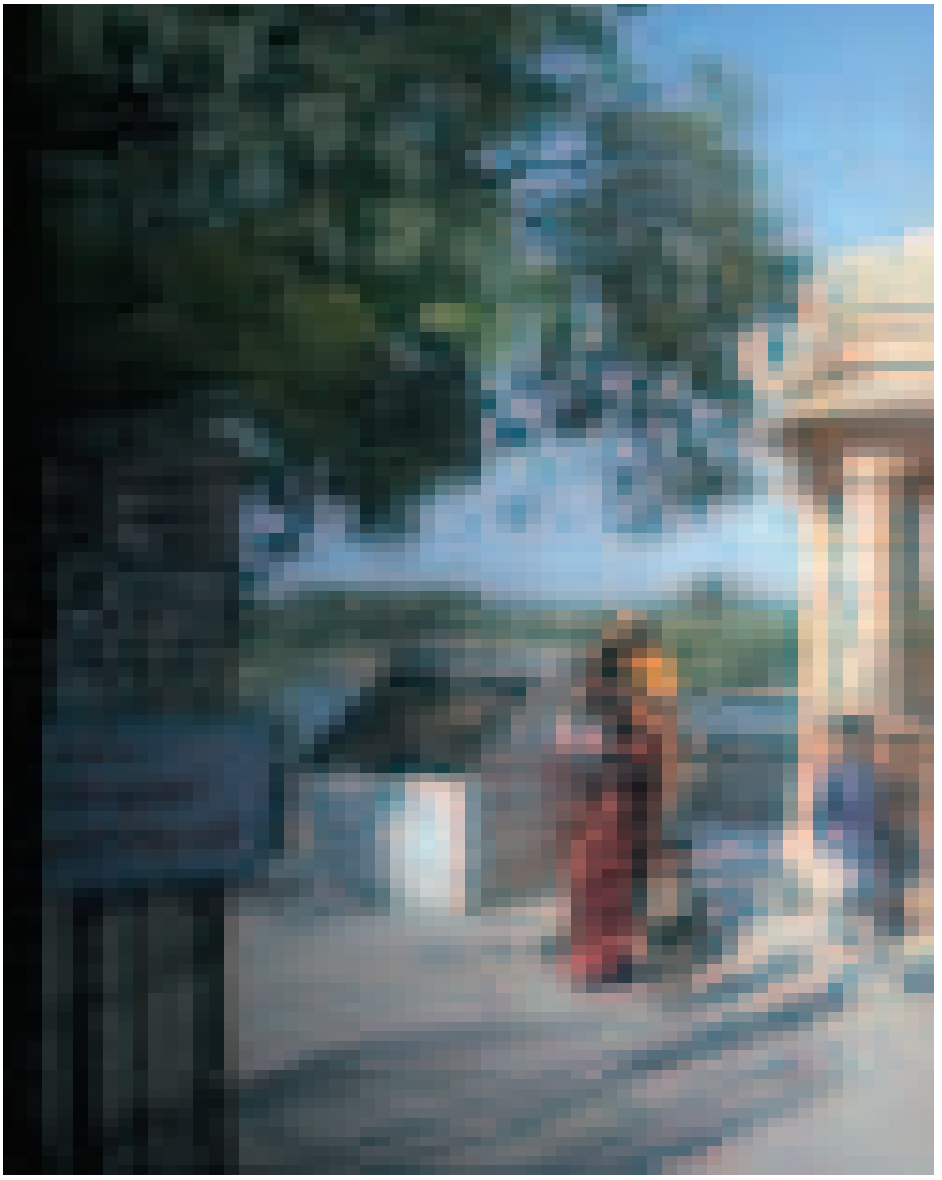
To see Someśvara, I passed through two impressive pillared halls. The Jyotir-liṅga looked like other Śiva-liṅgas I'd seen, but the priest told me that a person who has attained a certain degree of spirituality sees the Jyotir-liṅga as a column of fire piercing through the earth. Many people were visiting the temple, most of them to perform the *śrāddha* ceremony for the sake of their ancestors.

Outside, from the back of the temple I had a beautiful view of the ocean and the beach. Local people sold conch shells and small sculptures of deities, and pilgrims enjoyed riding on horses and camels.

When I returned to the police stand to retrieve my bags, an officer, pleased by my previous words of sincere praise, told me some history of the Somnath temple's repeated

Painting by Bharadvāja Dāsa

The present temple of Lord Śiva at Somnath, the seventh on the original site (far left), was completed in 1995 and dedicated by President Shankar Dayal Sharma. (Noteworthy: no land lies between the temple and the Antarctic.) At left, the hunter Jarā bows before Lord Kṛṣṇa accompanied by His personified symbols: the conch, club, disc, and lotus.



At the confluence of three rivers, pilgrims (right) visit a shrine dedicated to Lord Kṛṣṇa's sacred feet (below). At this spot, Kṛṣṇa left this world after being shot in the foot by Jarā.

destruction. He compared the temple to the mythical Phoenix, a bird that burns up but leaves behind an egg so that another Phoenix can rise.

"Similarly" he said, "this temple, with the deity whose shape is like that of an egg, has risen eight times after being plundered and reduced to ruins between A.D. 1300 and A.D. 1707."

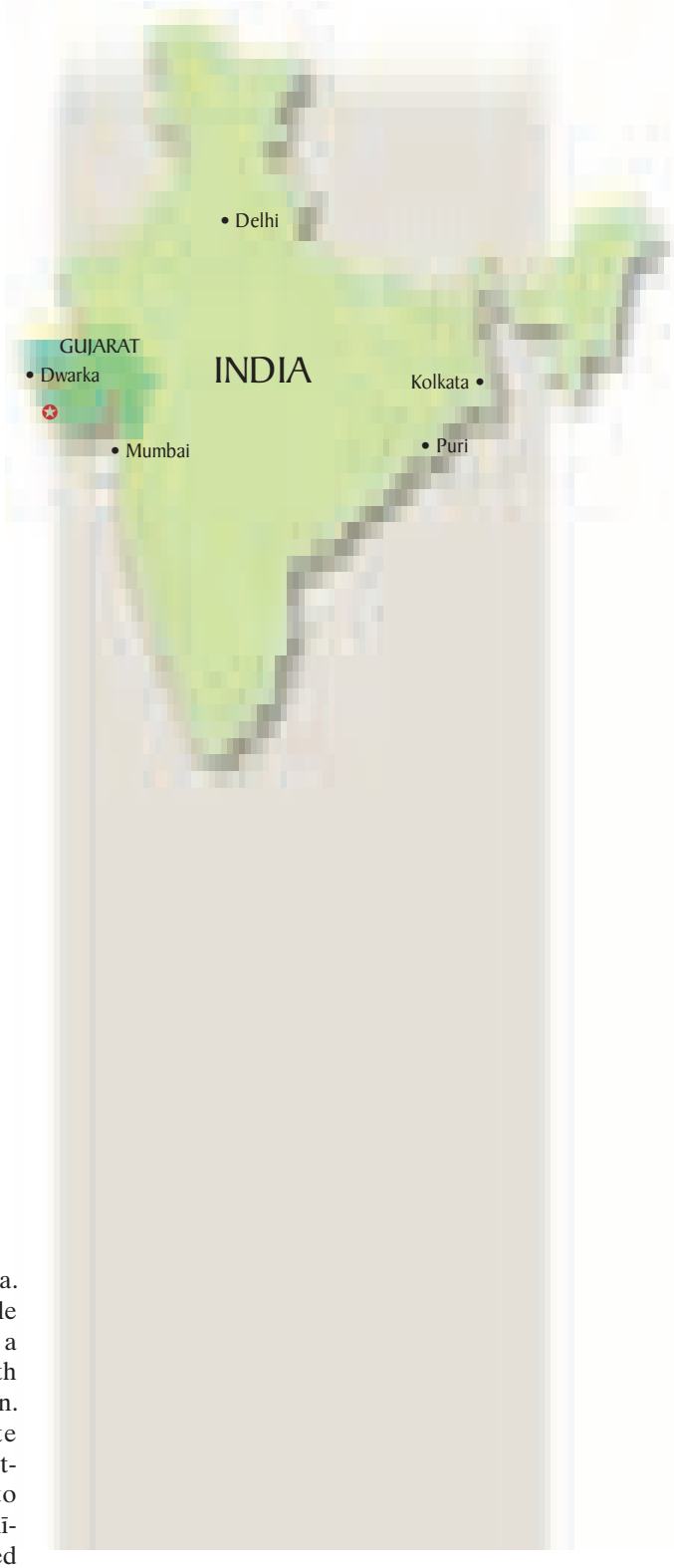
While excavating for the present temple, workers found the remains of many former temples. Unearthed sculptures, artistic pillars, ceilings, and inscriptions are displayed in the Prabhas Patan museum in town. The original temple is said to have been built in four phases. Soma, the moon-god, built it out of gold; Rāvaṇa, the enemy of Lord Rāma, rebuilt it out of silver; Lord Kṛṣṇa rebuilt it out of wood; and the Pāṇḍava Bhīma rebuilt it out of stone.

References to Prabhāsa can be found in the *Ṛg Veda* and in several *Purāṇas.* The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (*Bhāgavata Purāṇa*) mentions that Lord Balarāma came here twice, once when He went on pilgrimage to avoid taking sides in the Battle of Kurukshetra, and again, on the request of sages, after He killed the disrespectful Romaharṣaṇa Sūta.

At Prabhāsa Arjuna heard that Lord Balarāma was arranging the marriage of Subhadrā to Duryodhana. Disguising himself as a mendicant, Arjuna went to Dwarka and eventually won Subhadrā's hand.

Origin of the Temple Deity

The story of Candra's installation of Someśvara is found in the *Skanda Purāṇa* and the *Mahābhārata.* Although Candra, the moon-god, was married to all twenty-seven daughters of the progenitor Dakṣa, he was partial to Rohiṇī, keeping her always with him and neglecting the others. Annoyed, the other twenty-six wives complained to their father. After repeated warnings, Dakṣa cursed Candra to suffer from tuberculosis, lose his beauty and radiance, and wane into nothingness. Candra's affliction disturbed the tides and the growth of vegetation. Sages asked Dakṣa to with-



draw his curse, but he said he didn't have the power to do so. He advised Candra to take refuge in Lord Śiva. Candra came to Prabhāsa with his wife Rohiṇī, found the Jyotir-liṅga here, and worshiped Lord Śiva in that form. Pleased, Lord Śiva blessed Candra with fortnightly phases of waning and waxing. Because the moon regained his growth and light here, the place became known as Prabhāsa ("to shine").

While riding on the two-wheeled horse carriage from Somnath to the Gītā temple, I passed by the Sūrya (sun) temple and Pandava-guha, a cave associated with Pāṇḍavas, who according to the *Mahābhārata* did penance at Prabhāsa. In the Gītā temple, I saw the deity of flute-playing Kṛṣṇa. On the right side of the temple in a small attached shrine is a deity of Lord Balarāma with Ananta Śeṣa, His expansion. This is considered the site where Lord Balarāma departed from the earth. Next to Balarāma's shrine is a Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa temple. A room used by Vallabhācārya, founder of the Puṣṭī Mārga spiritual line, is in a courtyard nearby. His followers worship this place.

Opposite the Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa temple is the confluence of three rivers: the Hiranya, the Kapila, and the now dried up Saraswati. Lord Kṛṣṇa left the earth from this spot. His footprints in marble are installed in a small open shrine.

On the way to Veraval, a larger city six kilometers northwest of Somnath, I stopped in Bhalka village to visit a Kṛṣṇa temple known as Bhalka Tirtha. The temple is built around the tree under which Kṛṣṇa was sitting when Jarā the hunter shot an arrow into

Pilgrims approach the main entrance to Lord Śiva's temple (top). Pillars (above) and bas reliefs (right) from the previous Śiva temples are on display in the Prabhas Museum.

Lord Kṛṣṇa's Disappearance

"ŚUKADEVA GOSVĀMĪ SAID: Then Lord Brahmā arrived at Prabhāsa along with Lord Śiva and his consort, the sages, the Prajāpatis, and all the demigods, headed by Indra. The forefathers, Siddhas, Gandharvas, Vidyādharas, and great serpents also came, along with the Cāraṇas, Yakṣas, Rākṣasas, Kinnaras, Apsarās, and relatives of Garuḍa, greatly eager to witness the departure of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. As they were coming, all these personalities variously chanted and glorified the birth and activities of Lord Śauri [Kṛṣṇa].

"O King, crowding the sky with their many airplanes, they showered down flowers with great devotion. Seeing before Him Brahmā [the grandfather of the universe] and the other demigods [who are all His personal and powerful expansions], the Almighty Lord closed His lotus eyes, fixing His mind within Himself, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

"Without employing the mystic *āgneyī* meditation to burn up His transcendental body, which is the all-attractive resting place of all the worlds and the object of all the worlds and the object of all contemplation and meditation, Lord Kṛṣṇa entered into His own abode.

"As soon as Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa left the earth, Truth, Religion, Faithfulness, Glory, and Beauty, immediately followed Him. Kettledrums resounded in the heavens and flowers showered from the sky.

"Most of the demigods and other higher beings led by Brahmā could not see Lord Kṛṣṇa as He was entering His own abode, since He did not reveal His movements. But some of them did catch sight of Him, and they were extremely amazed.

"Just as ordinary men cannot ascertain the path of a lightning bolt as it leaves a cloud, the demigods could not trace out the movements of Lord Kṛṣṇa as He returned to His abode.

"A few of the demigods, however—notably Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva—could ascertain how the Lord's mystic power was working, and thus they became astonished. All the demigods praised the Lord's mystic power and then returned to their own planets.

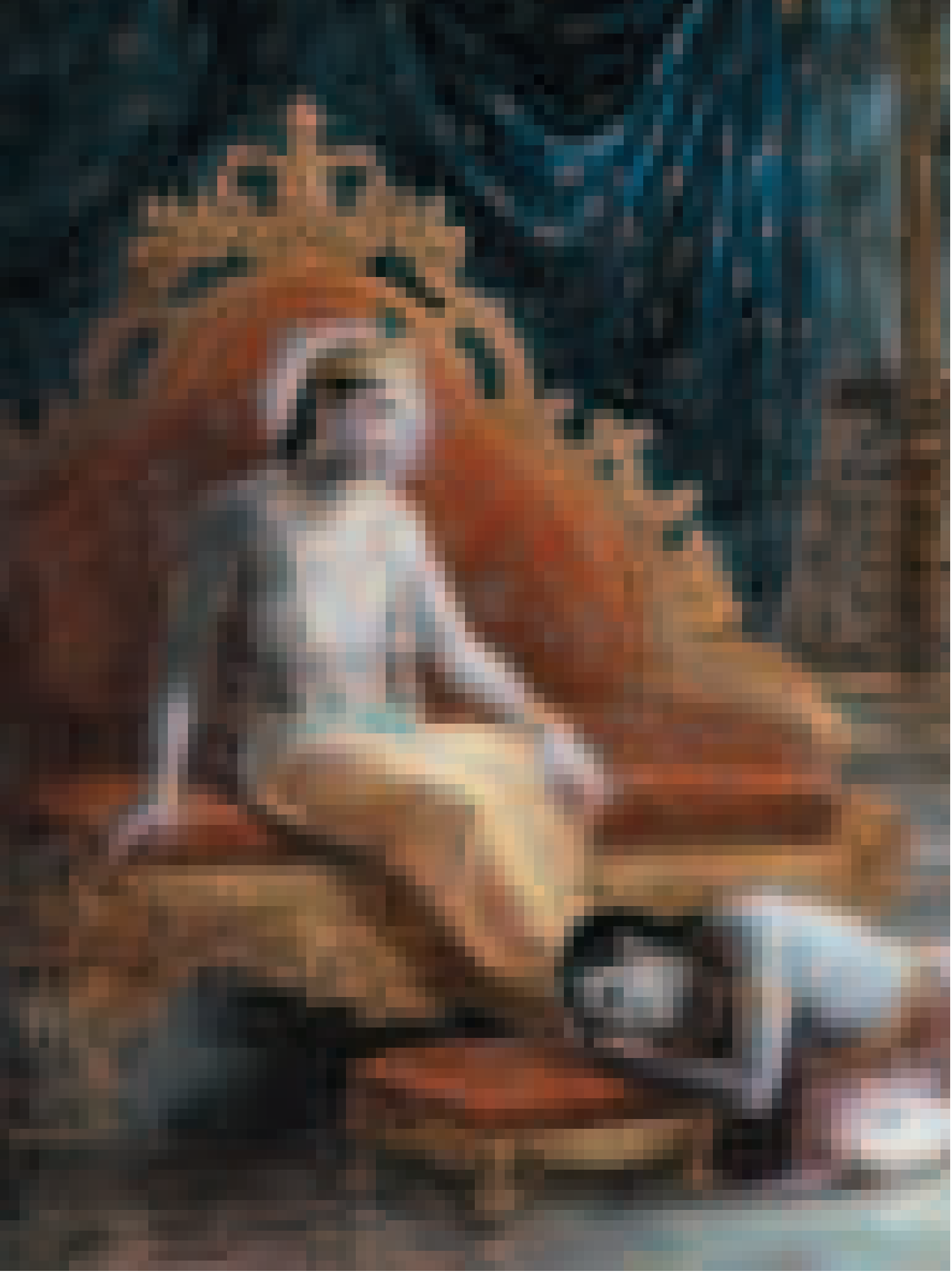
"My dear King, you should understand that the Supreme Lord's appearance and disappearance, which resemble those of embodied conditioned souls, are actually a show enacted by His illusory energy, just like the performance of an actor. After creating this universe He enters into it, plays within it for some time, and at last winds it up. Then the Lord remains situated in His own transcendental glory, having ceased from the functions of cosmic manifestation." (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.31.1–11)

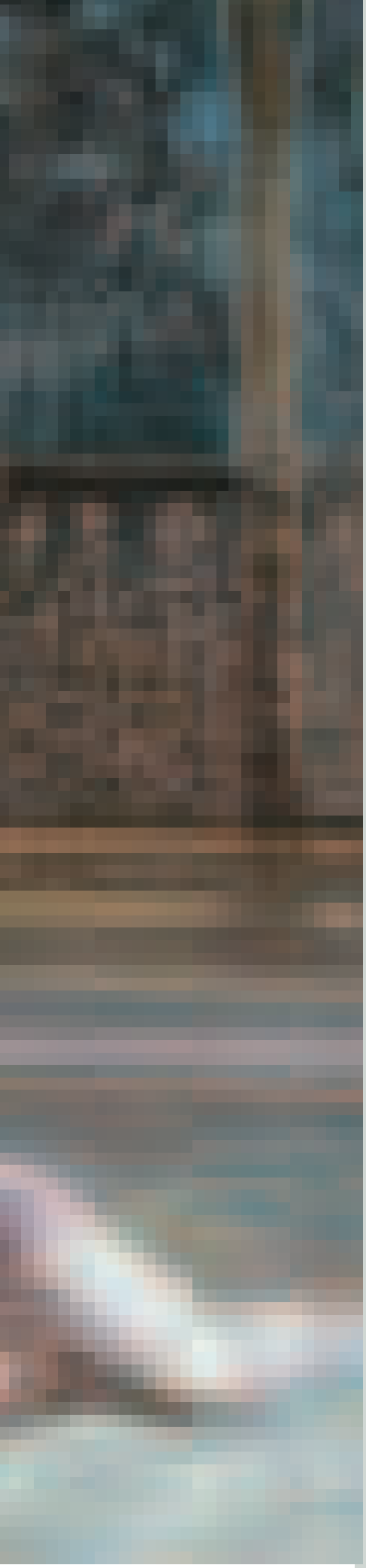
Unfortunately, nowadays some people and some tourist publications try to diminish Lord Kṛṣṇa's glories by treating His disappearance pastimes like the activities of an ordinary human being and using phrases like "breathed his last" and "renounced his mor-tal human form." By such disinformation, they misguide sincere pilgrims to Somnath. Guided by pure devotees like Śrīla Prabhupāda, we should value and glorify the Lord's departing pastimes, which are as inconceivably wonderful as all His other acts.

His foot. On the left side of the tree is a white marble altar on which Lord Kṛṣṇa is sitting. His pink foot points toward Jarā, who kneels with folded hands. At this spot Lord Kṛṣṇa spoke His final instructions to Uddhava. [See "The Song Goes Ever On," page 25.]

I was encouraged at Somnath to see that *brāhmaṇas* and *kṣatriyas* are preserving and protecting *sanātana-dharma*—eternal religious principles. The government of Gujarat is protecting the temples, which were repeatedly raided by invaders and face the same threat today. And Vaiṣṇava priests of the Vallabha line are preserving authentic spiritual knowledge, which is always threatened by the misinterpretations of atheists.

Adbhuta Hari Dāsa joined ISKCON in 1994 in Croatia. He serves as personal assistant to his spiritual master, Śrīdhara





Painting by Dhṛtī Devī Dāsī

The Song Goes Ever On

A brief look at Uddhava and the Uddhava Gītā.

by Satyarāja Dāsa

AT A RECENT academic conference, I found myself engulfed in a discussion about the *Bhagavad-gītā,* the battlefield dialogue between Kṛṣṇa, or God, and his dedicated devotee Arjuna, the heroic warrior.

"The *Gītā* gives us the most profound philosophy," I said to one of the scholars. "It shows us how Kṛṣṇa interacts with His loving devotees."

A nearby eavesdropper, hearing only the barest details of my discussion, queried, "Oh, are you talking about *Gīta-govinda,* where Kṛṣṇa shows His love for Rādhā?"

"Well, no, I . . . "

Another scholar, standing only a few feet away, chimed in: "I think he was talking about the *Anugītā,* a summary of the *Bhagavad-gītā* found later in the *Mahābhārata.*"

At an academic conference of scholars who specialize in India's religious texts, my reference to "the *Gītā*" turned out to be a careless one—India is full of *Gītās,* the *Bhagavad-gītā* being one among many.

When I returned home, I decided to look at Śrīla Prabhupāda's books to see which *Gītās* he considered important. To my surprise, in the Third Canto of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.4.32, purport), Prabhupāda says something interesting about the *Uddhava Gītā:* "Undoubtedly, the *Bhagavad-gītā* was spoken by the Lord on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra just to encourage Arjuna to fight, and yet to complete the transcendental knowledge of *Bhagavad-gītā,* the Lord instructed Uddhava. The Lord wanted Uddhava to fulfill His mission and disseminate knowledge which He had not spoken even in *Bhagavad-gītā.*"

It is not that Śrīla Prabhupāda is here minimizing the importance of the *Bhagavad-gītā,* which elsewhere he praises as the most profound philosophy known to man. But he is saying something about the unique importance of the *Uddhava Gītā.*

KṚṢIA'S OTHER GĪTĀ

The *Uddhava Gītā* is found in the Eleventh Canto of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Chapters 7–29. It is one of many *Gītās* associated with the worship of Kṛṣṇa. Though the *Bhagavad-gītā* is arguably the most famous of these *Gītās,* the tradition offers us *Gīta-govinda, Gopī Gītā, Veṇu Gītā, Bhramara Gītā,* and several others. *Gītā* means "song," and within the context of sacred literature, it refers to particularly mellifluous and blessed songs of divine

Left: Uddhava falls at Lord Kṛṣṇa's feet with humility and gratitude, having heard from the Lord His teachings on the Absolute Truth.

The Uddhava Saṁdesa

Painting by Bharadvāja Dāsa

While the gopis' *pain is somewhat assuaged by Uddhava's presence, they are ultimately inconsolable in their unrequited love for Kṛṣṇa.*

IN ADDITION TO his brief appearance in the Third Canto of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and his elaborate role in the Eleventh (*Uddhava Gītā*), Uddhava is also prominent in the Tenth Canto. There, Kṛṣṇa sends Uddhava to Vṛndāvana to console His devotees, who are pining for Him. Uddhava's message to the people of Vṛndāvana is known as *Uddhava Sandeśa* ("Uddhava's Message").

Uddhava speaks first with Nanda and Yaśodā, reminding them that Kṛṣṇa is eternally present with them, and within them; He dwells in the hearts of all living beings. The next day, Uddhava delivers a similar message to the *gopīs.* When the *gopīs* see him for the first time, they are struck by his resemblance to Kṛṣṇa, both in his physical features and in his apparel. This resemblance, of course, increases their sense of separation from their beloved. Before speaking to them, Uddhava listens to their outpouring of love: he hears them lament with aching hearts, bemoaning their intolerable position, their vacant world in Kṛṣṇa's absence. (10.47.4–21).

Overtaken by their unmotivated and uninterrupted devotion, Uddhava praises them as the best of all devotees. He conveys the Lord's message: He is all-pervasive, and so the *gopīs* are always united with Him in love. But these words ring hollow in the presence of the *gopīs'* passionate longing for the love of their lives. Still, Uddhava tells them that they must cultivate the ability to see Kṛṣṇa spiritually, in their heart of hearts. It is for this reason that He remains separate from them—so that they might develop a deeper vision, understanding Him to be always united with them in a love whose intensity cannot be shaken by mere physical absence.

Though the *gopīs* accept all that Uddhava says as philosophically accurate, they are still adamant that union is better than separation, and they ask whether Kṛṣṇa still remembers them, His faithful Vṛndāvana companions. While their pain is somewhat assuaged by Uddhava's presence, they are ultimately inconsolable in their unrequited love.

Uddhava is amazed by their unwavering devotion, and he again praises them as true models for all Kṛṣṇa devotees. So moved is he that he prays to be reborn as a shrub, creeper, or herb in Vṛndāvana, so that he might catch the dust kicked up by their feet. (10.47.61–63)

truth, uttered by great devotees or by the Lord himself. The songs include both philosophical and devotional outpourings.

Uddhava Gītā is among the most important of the genre, for it focuses on Kṛṣṇa's final instructions before leaving the earthly plane. More, these instructions are delivered to Uddhava, recognized by the tradition as a *mahābhāgavata,* or "greatest among the devotees," and as *mukhyaṁ kṛṣṇa-parigrahe,* "foremost of those who are intimate with Kṛṣṇa." (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.4.24) He is also Kṛṣṇa's cousin, and practically His twin in appearance.

For these reasons and others, it is curious that the *Uddhava Gītā* has never enjoyed the fame of its sister text, the *Bhagavad-gītā,* with which it shares several verses in common. In certain ways, the *Uddhava Gītā* goes further than the *Bhagavad-gītā,* as Prabhupāda tells us, illuminating the *Bhagavad-gītā's* central teaching of devotion to Kṛṣṇa and emphasizing the importance of seeing Kṛṣṇa everywhere, in everyone, and at all times.

WHO IS UDDHAVA?

The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* introduces Uddhava in the Third Canto. Uddhava meets the Pāṇḍavas' uncle Vidura, who asks Uddhava about his conversation with Kṛṣṇa (*Uddhava Gītā*) and about Kṛṣṇa's associates and family members. The *Bhāgava-*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam informs us of Uddhava's single-minded devotion—from the age of five he was absorbed in Kṛṣṇa and nothing more.

• • • •

tam (3.2.2) informs us at this point of Uddhava's single-minded devotion—from the age of five he was absorbed in Kṛṣṇa and nothing more. It also reveals the depth of Uddhava's love for Kṛṣṇa. On remembering Him, "Uddhava had all the transcendental bodily changes due to total ecstasy, and he was trying to wipe away tears of separation from his eyes." (3.2.5) Clearly, Uddhava is no ordinary player, even in this most transcendental of plays.

Uddhava begins to answer Vidura's questions by poetically telling him, "The sun of the world, Lord Kṛṣṇa, has set, and our house [the Kuru dynasty] has now been swallowed by the great snake of time." (3.2.7) He recounts Kṛṣṇa's pastimes in Vṛndāvana, many of which took place near the Yamuna River, where Vidura and Uddhava now sit. He then describes the many events that took place in Mathura and in Dwarka, in the latter part of Kṛṣṇa's manifest pastimes.

Though Vidura, at this point, wants Uddhava to be his spiritual master, Uddhava is concerned about etiquette. Vidura is senior to him, and so, ultimately, he sends him to Maitreya, a sage in whom Uddhava has great confidence. Maitreya was present while Uddhava received instructions from Kṛṣṇa, and so Maitreya, too, heard truth directly from the lips of the Lord. Hence Uddhava's certainty that Maitreya could ably guide Vidura.

In this portion of the *Bhāgavatam* are two significant verses about Uddhava from the lips of Lord Kṛṣṇa himself: "Now I shall leave the vision of this world, and I see that Uddhava, the foremost of My devotees, is the only one who can be directly entrusted with knowledge about Me. Uddhava is not inferior to Me in any way because he is never affected by the modes of material nature. Therefore he may remain in this world to disseminate specific knowledge of the Personality of Godhead." (3.4.30–31)

A Taste of the Uddhava Gītā

The setting of the *Uddhava Gītā* is the last night of Kṛṣṇa's manifest pastimes on this planet. He is planning to leave at a predetermined time, and His loving devotee Uddhava, knowing Kṛṣṇa's plan, approaches Him: "O Lord Keśava, my dear master, I cannot tolerate giving up Your lotus feet even for a fraction of a moment. I urge You to take me along with You to Your own abode." (11.6.43)

Kṛṣṇa, of course, is naturally inclined to comply with His devotees' wishes. Still, He has a higher mission for Uddhava: to stay and sing His glories again and again. Kṛṣṇa explains the importance of detachment and tells Uddhava to roam the world as a renunciant, specifically to go to Badarikashram, high in the Himalayas, and to tell the sages there of His life and teachings.

Just to be clear on what these teachings are, Kṛṣṇa explains in great detail the philosophy summarized in the *Bhagavad-gītā.* He begins by saying that the material world is ephemeral and that God and the soul are eternal. He explains the distinction between the body and the self, the soul, just as He does in the *Bhagavad-gītā.* But here He adds scriptural references and analogies to enhance His argument.

Uddhava asks Kṛṣṇa how one can realize the truth of the soul, since the material world and its illusions are so immediate, so alluring. How one can relinquish attachments and control the mind?

Kṛṣṇa explains that the human intellect is capable of cultivating spiritual knowledge. Kṛṣṇa stresses the importance of approaching a guru, but He also says that one can observe many truths by heeding the "spiritual master" known as nature. He enumerates for Uddhava twenty-four teachers of the true spiritual seeker, including the earth, the air, and the sky. From the air, for example, one can learn to come in touch with sense objects while remaining unaffected by them.

Kṛṣṇa next explains the complexities of karma, giving vivid examples of just how entangling karma can be. He recommends only pure works, done on His behalf.

Kṛṣṇa then explains the three modes of material nature—goodness, passion, and ignorance—and how to become free from their influence. He points out the importance of keeping company with devotees, giving elaborate details on how to identify who is truly advanced in spiritual life, and who is not.

Kṛṣṇa also conveys to Uddhava the art of meditation, explaining that meditation reaches its perfection when one learns how to meditate on Him. He then points out the importance of deity worship and delineates the specifics of formal worship of installed deities. This leads to an elaborate discussion of *bhakti-yoga,* the science of devoting oneself to God.

Kṛṣṇa then outlines the yogic *siddhīs,* or the mystic powers one may develop through yoga. He explains that such powers can be an asset but are more often a deficit, distracting practitioners from the path of devotion.

Uddhava asks Kṛṣṇa to list His divine attributes, so that devotees will have substance for meditation and contemplation. Kṛṣṇa is pleased by the request, praising Uddhava as expert in

(*please turn to page 42*)

CALENDAR

This calendar is calculated for Māyāpur, West Bengal, India. The dates, derived from a lunar calendar, may vary by one day for other locations. Consult your local Hare Kṛṣṇa temple for the exact dates for your area.

Because the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement comes in disciplic line from Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the calendar includes not only dates relevant to all followers of the Vedic tradition but also dates relating to Lord Caitanya's associates and prominent spiritual masters in His disciplic succession.

Month of Govinda
(February 7–March 6)

MARCH

2—Amalakī-vrata Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

3—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Mādhavendra Purī, the spiritual master of Lord Caitanya's spiritual master.

6—Śrī Gaura Pūrṇimā, the appearance anniversary of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who is Kṛṣṇa Himself in the role of His own devotee. Fasting till moonrise, followed by a break-fast of Ekādaśī *prasādam* (no grains or beans). Feasting tomorrow.

Month of Viṣṇu
(March 7–April 5)

14—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita, one of Lord Caitanya's principal associates.

17—Pāpamocanī Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

26—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Rāmānujācārya, a Vaiṣṇava philosopher and spiritual master who appeared in the eleventh century.

30—Śrī Rāma Navamī, the appearance anniversary of Lord Rāmacandra. Fasting till sunset, followed by feasting.

APRIL

1—Kāmadā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

5—Śrī Kṛṣṇa Vasanta Rāsa, Lord Kṛṣṇa's springtime *rāsa* dance. Balarāma Rāsa Yātrā, Lord Balarāma's *rāsa* dance. Appearance anniversary of Hanumānjī, eternal servant of Lord Rāma. Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Śyāmānanda Paṇḍita, a follower of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana.

Month of Madhusūdana
(April 6–May 4)

14—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Vṛndāvana Dāsa Ṭhākura, the author of *Śrī Caitanya Bhāgavata,* a biography on Lord Caitanya.

15—Varūthinī Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

19—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Gadādhara Paṇḍita, one of Lord Caitanya's principal associates.

22—Beginning of Candana Yātrā, the festival of anointing Lord Jagannātha with sandalwood pulp for twenty-one days.

29—Appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Sītā Devī, the consort of Lord Rāmacandra. Appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Jāhnavā Devī, the consort of Lord Nityānanda Prabhu. Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Madhu Paṇḍita, a great devotee of Lord Caitanya.

MAY

1—Mohinī Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

2—Rukmiṇī Dvādaśī, appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Rukmiṇī Devī, the consort of Lord Kṛṣṇa as Dvārakādhīśa, Lord of Dvārakā.

3—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Jayānanda Prabhu, a dedicated disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda who helped him bring the Rathayātrā festival to the Western world.

4—Nṛsiṁha Caturdaśī, appearance anniversary of Lord Nṛsiṁhadeva, Lord Kṛṣṇa's half-man, half-lion incarnation. Fasting till dusk, followed by feasting. Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Śrīnivāsa Ācārya, a follower of the six Gosvāmīs. Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Mādhavendra Purī, spiritual master of Lord Caitanya's spiritual master (Īśvara Purī).

Month of Trivikrama
(May 5–June 3)

9—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Rāmānanda Rāya, an intimate associate of Lord Caitanya.

14—Aparā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

15—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Vṛndāvana Dāsa Ṭhākura, the author of *Śrī Caitanya Bhāgavata,* a biography on Lord Caitanya.

FINDING THE SILVER LINING

Nurturing our faith helps ease the inevitable suffering of life in the material world.

by Rashi Singh

I'M GROGGY. It's early. I'm way too tired to go to work today. After nearly shattering my alarm clock, I slowly drag myself out of bed. I shower, worship my deities, chant my rounds, and head downstairs for breakfast. I glance at the newspaper that sits untouched on the kitchen table.

"Father Convicted of Killing Two Children"

"Young Couple Victim of Hit and Run"

"Infant Dies of Malnutrition After Abandonment"

And I thought my problems were bad.

True to my morning ritual, I glance at Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, who guard the kitchen through the antique picture frame that hangs above the table. I flash Them my best "good-morning-have-a-great-day" smile and touch Their feet. Usually, I'd now head out to face the cut-throat corporate world. But today I pause, turn around, and pull up a chair in front of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.

"I don't get it," I say aloud.

I scan the vicinity to ensure that no one is within earshot.

When I'm sure the coast is clear, I say, "This world is filled with suffering. Even the people who try to serve You go through so much misery. Why?"

The only thing I know for sure is that I'm not the only one who doesn't quite understand the apparent inequality and unfairness of the material world, characterized by birth, death, old age, and disease. The current age of Kali is further characterized by greed, drought, famine, envy, irreligion, and, well, the kinds of stories you read about in the newspaper every morning. In fact, the entire history of the material world is filled with sadness and tragedy, even during Lord Kṛṣṇa's time here. Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself went through seemingly troubled times, such as His separation from His beloved *gopīs,* the cowherd girls. His paternal aunt and dedicated servant Kuntī lost five grandsons to murder in one night. His sister, Subhadrā, lost her son Abhimanyu in the battle of Kurukṣetra. His friend Arjuna was faced with a dilemma most of us never even dreamed of: whether or not to kill some of his own family. The Lord's great devotee Prahlāda Mahārāja was tormented by his own father and survived several of his father's plots to kill him. Why must the Lord's own servants suffer so much in this world?

People can tell us until they're blue in the face to have

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unflinching faith in the Lord and devotion to Him, amidst all of our pain and suffering. People can tell us to trust that the Lord has a specific plan for us and it's fruitless for us to try to comprehend this plan. But that doesn't stop us from hurting, or from dwelling on our misfortunes. But here's the thing: Those people are right. If Lord Kṛṣṇa can put His own family and intimate associates in such severe "misery," what makes us so special?

KṚṢIA AND THE GOPĪS

Probably the most touching of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes involve His association with His most dedicated and sincere servants, the *gopīs.* They were absorbed in thoughts of Him twenty-four hours a day. They cringed at the thought of grass hurting the soles of His lotus feet as He traversed the forests of Vṛndāvana. His happiness was their happiness.

One day, the *gopīs* were enjoying spending time with their beloved when they began to feel proud of being with Him. Sensing their pride, the Lord disappeared from their sight. The pure, simple-hearted *gopīs* could not endure even one moment without Kṛṣṇa's company. Their pain was immeasurable; the only thing they could think about was where He was, why He'd left them, and if He was all right. Their tears were plentiful, their grief unbearable. They sought advice from animate and inanimate objects alike: Had anyone seen their beloved? Where had He gone? In their desperate attempts to find Him, they became even more immersed in thoughts of Him. When He finally reunited with them, they couldn't have been happier or more relieved. But they were still confused; they could not understand why He'd left them to begin with. When they asked Him, He responded as follows (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.32.20–22):

> The reason I do not immediately reciprocate the affection of living beings even when they worship Me, O *gopīs,* is that I want to intensify their loving devotion. They then become like a poor man who has gained some wealth and then lost it, and who thus becomes so anxious about it that he can think of nothing else. My dear girls, understanding that simply for My sake you had rejected the authority of worldly opinion, of the *Vedas,* and of your relatives, I acted as I did only to increase your attachment to Me. Even when I removed Myself from your sight by suddenly disappearing, I never stopped loving you. Therefore, My beloved *gopīs,* please do not harbor any bad feelings toward Me, your beloved. I am not able to repay My debt for your spotless service, even within a lifetime of Brahmā. Your connection with Me is beyond reproach. You have worshiped Me, cutting off all domestic ties, which are difficult to break. Therefore please let your own glorious deeds be your compensation.

KṚṢIA IS LISTENING

It is clear: More than anything else, we should understand that so-called misfortune and disaster truly are a form of Kṛṣṇa's mercy. They are a sign that Kṛṣṇa is trying to deepen our love for Him, intensify our devotion.

It is true what people say: Unflinching faith is really the answer to all our problems and uncertainties. There are times when it appears that Kṛṣṇa is neglecting us or not listening to our prayers. But as the Supersoul, He's always listening. He's not our order-carrier. His will is what ensues. The better and more sincerely we serve Him, the more He reciprocates and answers our prayers.

Pure devotees want nothing from Kṛṣṇa but more opportunities to serve Him and His devotees. Our goal should be to aim to attain even the smallest fraction of the mood of the *gopīs.* Kṛṣṇa was so overwhelmed and appreciative of the *gopīs'* loving service that He told them, "I have nothing left to give you. Please be content with your own actions." He becomes indebted to them. The creator, the proprietor of everything, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, had nothing left to give those dear sweet *gopīs.* In fact, He was so overwhelmed by their pure love for Him that *He* became *their* servant. He did all He could to satisfy them. If they asked Him to dance, He danced. If they asked Him to play the flute, He played. That is the beauty of the relationship between the Lord and His

(*please turn to page 58*)

Referred to as "the ripe fruit of the tree of Vedic literature," *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the most complete and authoritative exposition of Vedic knowledge. Five thousand years ago the great sage Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa composed this *purāṇa,* or history, to explain the essence of spiritual knowledge. Here we present *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in serialized form, with the original Sanskrit text, transliteration, word meanings, translation, and purports by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

LORD SIVA'S

While trying to persuade Satī not to visit her father, Dakṣa, Lord Śiva explains why he did not rise to show Dakṣa customary respect.

CANTO 4: CHAPTER 3

23 सत्त्वं विशुद्धं वसुदेवशब्दितं
यदीयते तत्र पुमानपावृतः
सत्त्वे च तस्मिन् भगवान् वासुदेवो
ह्यधोक्षजो मे नमसा विधीयते

sattvaṁ viśuddhaṁ vasudeva-śabditaṁ
yad īyate tatra pumān apāvṛtaḥ
sattve ca tasmin bhagavān vāsudevo
hy adhokṣajo me namasā vidhīyate

sattvam—consciousness; *viśuddham*—pure; *vasudeva*—Vasudeva; *śabditam*—known as; *yat*—because; *īyate*—is revealed; *tatra*—there; *pumān*—the Supreme Person; *apāvṛtaḥ*—without any covering; *sattve*—in consciousness; *ca*—and; *tasmin*—in that; *bhagavān*—the Supreme Personality of Godhead; *vāsudevaḥ*—Vāsudeva; *hi*—because; *adhokṣajaḥ*—transcendental; *me*—by me; *namasā*—with obeisances; *vidhīyate*—worshiped.

I am always engaged in offering obeisances to Lord Vāsudeva in pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is always pure consciousness, in which the Supreme Personality of Godhead, known as Vāsudeva, is revealed without any covering.

PURPORT: The living entity is constitutionally pure. *Asaṅgo hy ayaṁ puruṣaḥ.* In the Vedic literature it is said that the soul is always pure and uncontaminated by material attachment. The identification of the body with the soul is due to misunderstanding. As soon as one is fully Kṛṣṇa conscious it is to be understood that one is in his pure, original constitutional position. This state of existence is called *śuddha-sattva,* which means that it is transcendental to the material qualities. Since this *śuddha-sattva* existence is under the direct action of the internal potency, in this state the activities of material consciousness stop. For example, when iron is put into a fire, it becomes warm, and when red-hot, although it is iron, it acts like fire. Similarly, when copper is surcharged with electricity, its action as copper stops; it acts as electricity. *Bhagavad-gītā* (14.26) also confirms that anyone who engages in unadulterated devotional service to the Lord is at once elevated to the position of pure Brahman:

māṁ ca yo 'vyabhicāreṇa
bhakti-yogena sevate
sa guṇān samatītyaitān
brahma-bhūyāya kalpate

Therefore *śuddha-sattva,* as described in this verse, is the

(1) What is the meaning of śuddha-sattva**?**
(2) How can one at once be elevated to the position of pure Brahman?

transcendental position, which is technically called *vasudeva.* Vasudeva is also the name of the person from whom Kṛṣṇa appears. This verse explains that the pure state is called *vasudeva* because in that state Vāsudeva, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is revealed without any covering. To execute unadulterated devotional service, therefore, one must follow the rules and regulations of devotional service without desire to gain material profit by fruitive activities or mental speculation.

In pure devotional service one simply serves the Supreme Personality of Godhead as a matter of duty, without reason and without being impeded by material conditions. That is called *śuddha-sattva,* or *vasudeva,* because in that stage the Supreme Person, Kṛṣṇa, is revealed in the heart of the devotee. Śīla Jīva Gosvāmī has very nicely described this *vasudeva,* or *śuddha-sattva,* in his *Bhagavat-sandarbha.* He explains that *aṣṭottara-śata* (108) is added to the name of the spiritual master to indicate one who is situated in *śuddha-sattva,* or in the transcendental state of *vasudeva.*

The word *vasudeva* is also used for other purposes. For example, *vasudeva* also means one who is everywhere, or all-pervading. The sun is also called *vasudeva-śabditam.* The word *vasudeva* may be utilized for different purposes, but whatever purpose we adopt, Vāsudeva means the all-pervading or localized Supreme Personality of Godhead. In *Bhagavad-gītā* (7.19) it is also stated, *vāsudevaḥ sarvam iti.* Factual realization is to understand Vāsudeva, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and surrender unto Him. *Vasudeva* is the ground wherein Vāsudeva, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is revealed.

When one is free from the contamination of material nature and is situated in pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness, or in the *vasudeva* state, Vāsudeva, the Supreme Person, is revealed. This state is also called *kaivalya,* which means "pure consciousness." *Jñānaṁ sāttvikaṁ kaivalyam.* When one is situated in pure, transcendental knowledge, one is situated in *kaivalya.* Therefore *vasudeva* also means *kaivalya,* a word which is generally used by impersonalists. Impersonal *kaivalya* is not the last stage of realization, but in Kṛṣṇa consciousness *kaivalya,* when one understands the Supreme Personality of Godhead, then one is successful. In that pure state, by hearing, chanting, remembering, etc., because of the development of knowledge of the science of Kṛṣṇa, one can understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead. All these activities are under the guidance of the internal energy of the Supreme Lord.

The action of the internal potency is also described in this verse as *apāvṛtaḥ,* free from any covering. Because the Supreme Personality of Godhead, His name, His form, His quality, His paraphernalia, etc., being transcendental, are beyond material nature, it is not possible to understand any one of them with the materialistic senses. When the senses are purified by the discharge of pure devotional service (*hṛṣīkeṇa hṛṣīkeśa-sevanaṁ bhaktir ucyate*), the pure senses can see Kṛṣṇa without covering.

Now one may inquire that since factually the devotee has the same material existential body, how is it possible that the same materialistic eyes become purified by devotional service? The example, as stated by Lord Caitanya, is that devotional service cleanses the mirror of the mind. In a clean mirror one can see one's face very distinctly. Similarly, simply by cleansing the mirror of the mind one can have a clear conception of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. It is stated in *Bhagavad-gītā* (8.8), *abhyāsa-yoga-yuktena.* By executing one's prescribed duties in devotional service, *cetasā nānya-gāminā,* or simply by hearing about God and chanting about Him, if one's mind is always engaged in chanting and hearing and is not allowed to go elsewhere, one can realize the Supreme Personality of Godhead. As confirmed by Lord Caitanya, by the *bhakti-yoga* process, beginning from hearing and chanting, one can cleanse the heart and mind, and thus one can clearly see the face of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Lord Śiva said that since his heart was always filled with the conception of Vāsudeva, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, because of the Supreme Lord's presence within his mind and heart, he was always offering obeisances unto that Supreme Godhead. In other words, Lord Śiva is always in trance, *samādhi.* This *samādhi* is not under the control of the devotee; it is under the control of Vāsudeva, for the entire internal energy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead acts under His order. Of course, the material energy also acts by His order, but His direct will is specifically executed through the spiritual energy. Thus by His spiritual energy He reveals Himself.

It is stated in *Bhagavad-gītā* (4.6), *sambhavāmy ātma-māyayā. Ātma-māyayā* means "internal potency." By His sweet will He reveals Himself by His internal potency, being satisfied by the transcendental loving service of the devotee. The devotee never commands, "My dear Lord, please come here so that I can see You." It is not the position of the devotee to command the Supreme Personality of Godhead to come before him or to dance before him. There are many so-called devotees who command the Lord to come before them dancing. The Lord, however, is not subject to anyone's command, but if He is satisfied by one's pure devotional activities, He reveals Himself.

Therefore a meaningful word in this verse is *adhokṣaja,* for it indicates that the activities of our material senses will

(3) Why is 108 added to the name of the spiritual master?
(4) Why can't we understand the God's name, form, quality, and so on, with materialistic senses?
(5) How can one see the face of the Supreme Personality of Godhead?
(6) When does Kṛṣṇa reveal Himself?

fail to realize the Supreme Personality of Godhead. One cannot realize the Supreme Personality of Godhead simply by the attempt of one's speculative mind, but if one desires he can subdue all the material activities of his senses, and the Lord, by manifesting His spiritual energy, can reveal Himself to the pure devotee. When the Supreme Personality of Godhead reveals Himself to the pure devotee, the devotee has no other duty than to offer Him respectful obeisances. The Absolute Truth reveals Himself to the devotee in His form. He is not formless. Vāsudeva is not formless, for it is stated in this verse that as soon as the Lord reveals Himself, the devotee offers his obeisances. Obeisances are offered to a person, not to anything impersonal. One should not accept the Māyāvāda interpretation that Vāsudeva is impersonal. As stated in *Bhagavad-gītā, prapadyate,* one surrenders. One surrenders to a person, not to impersonal nonduality. Whenever there is a question of surrendering or offering obeisances, there must be an object of surrender or obeisances.

तत्ते निरीक्ष्यो न पितापि देहकृद्
दक्षो मम द्विट् तदनुव्रताश्च ये
24 यो विश्वसृग्यज्ञगतं वरोरु मा-
मनागसं दुर्वचसाकरोत्तिरः

tat te nirīkṣyo na pitāpi deha-kṛd
dakṣo mama dviṭ tad-anuvratāś ca ye
yo viśvasṛg-yajña-gataṁ varoru mām
anāgasaṁ durvacasākarot tiraḥ

tat—therefore; *te*—your; *nirīkṣyaḥ*—to be seen; *na*—not; *pitā*—your father; *api*—although; *deha-kṛt*—the giver of your body; *dakṣaḥ*—Dakṣa; *mama*—my; *dviṭ*—envious; *tat-anuvratāḥ*—his (Dakṣa's) followers; *ca*—also; *ye*—who; *yaḥ*—who (Dakṣa); *viśva-sṛk*—of the Viśvasṛks; *yajña-gatam*—being present at the sacrifice; *vara-ūru*—O Satī; *mām*—me; *anāgasam*—being innocent; *durvacasā*—with cruel words; *akarot tiraḥ*—has insulted.

Therefore you should not see your father, although he is the giver of your body, because he and his followers are envious of me. Because of his envy, O most worshipful one, he has insulted me with cruel words although I am innocent.

PURPORT: For a woman, both the husband and the father are equally worshipable. The husband is the protector of a woman during her youthful life, whereas the father is her protector during her childhood. Thus both are worshipable, but especially the father because he is the giver of the body. Lord Śiva reminded Satī, "Your father is undoubtedly worshipable, even more than I am, but take care, for although he is the giver of your body, he may also be the taker of your body ● because when you see your father, because of your association with me, he may insult you. An insult from a relative is worse than death, especially when one is well situated."[7]

यदि व्रजिष्यस्यतिहाय मद्वचो
भद्रं भवत्या न ततो भविष्यति
25 सम्भावितस्य स्वजनात्पराभवो
यदा स सद्यो मरणाय कल्पते

yadi vrajiṣyasy atihāya mad-vaco
bhadraṁ bhavatyā na tato bhaviṣyati
sambhāvitasya sva-janāt parābhavo
yadā sa sadyo maraṇāya kalpate

yadi—if; *vrajiṣyasi*—you will go; *atihāya*—neglecting; *mat-vacaḥ*—my words; *bhadram*—good; *bhavatyāḥ*—your; *na*—not; *tataḥ*—then; *bhaviṣyati*—will become; *sambhāvitasya*—most respectable; *svajanāt*—by your own relative; *parā-bhavaḥ*—are insulted; *yadā*—when; *saḥ*—that insult; *sadyaḥ*—immediately; *maraṇāya*—to death; *kalpate*—is equal.

If in spite of this instruction you decide to go, neglecting my words, the future will not be good for you. You are most respectable, and when you are insulted by your relative, this insult will immediately be equal to death.

CANTO FOUR: CHAPTER 4

मैत्रेय उवाच
एतावदुक्त्वा विरराम शङ्करः
पत्न्यङ्गनाशं ह्युभयत्र चिन्तयन्
1 सुहृद्दिदृक्षुः परिशङ्किता भवा-
न्निष्क्रामती निर्विशती द्विधास सा

maitreya uvāca
etāvad uktvā virarāma śaṅkaraḥ
patny-aṅga-nāśaṁ hy ubhayatra cintayan
suhṛd-didṛkṣuḥ pariśaṅkitā bhavān
niṣkrāmatī nirviśatī dvidhāsa sā

(7) Why did Lord Śiva think that Satī might be insulted by her father?

maitreyaḥ uvāca—Maitreya said; *etāvat*—so much; *uktvā*—after speaking; *virarāma*—was silent; *śaṅkaraḥ*—Lord Śiva; *patnī-aṅga-nāśam*—the destruction of the body of his wife; *hi*—since; *ubhayatra*—in both cases; *cintayan*—understanding; *suhṛt-didṛkṣuḥ*—being anxious to see her relatives; *pari-śaṅkitā*—being afraid; *bhavāt*—of Śiva; *niṣkrāmatī*—moving out; *nirviśatī*—moving in; *dvidhā*—divided; *āsa*—was; *sā*—she (Satī).

The sage Maitreya said: Lord Śiva was silent after speaking to Satī, seeing her between decisions. Satī was very much anxious to see her relatives at her father's house, but at the same time she was afraid of Lord Śiva's warning. Her mind unsettled, she moved in and out of the room as a swing moves this way and that.

PURPORT: Satī's mind was divided about whether to go to her father's house or obey the orders of Lord Śiva. The struggle between the two decisions was so strong that she was pushed from one side of the room to another, and she began to move just like the pendulum of a clock.

2

सुहृद्दिदृक्षाप्रतिघातदुर्मनाः
स्नेहाद्रुदत्यश्रुकलातिविह्वला
भवं भवान्यप्रतिपूरुषं रुषा
प्रधक्ष्यतीवैक्षत जातवेपथुः

suhṛd-didṛkṣā-pratighāta-durmanāḥ
snehād rudaty aśru-kalātivihvalā
bhavaṁ bhavāny apratipūruṣaṁ ruṣā
pradhakṣyatīvaikṣata jāta-vepathuḥ

suhṛt-didṛkṣā—of the desire to see her relatives; *pratighāta*—the prevention; *durmanāḥ*—feeling sorry; *snehāt*—from affection; *rudatī*—crying; *aśru-kalā*—by drops of tears; *ativihvalā*—very much afflicted; *bhavam*—Lord Śiva; *bhavānī*—Satī; *aprati-pūruṣam*—without an equal or rival; *ruṣā*—with anger; *pradhakṣyatī*—to blast; *iva*—as if; *aikṣata*—looked at; *jāta-vepathuḥ*—shaking.

Satī felt very sorry at being forbidden to go see her relatives at her father's house, and due to affection for them, tears fell from her eyes. Shaking and very much afflicted, she looked at her uncommon husband, Lord Śiva, as if she were going to blast him with her vision.

(8) Why is the word apratipūruṣam **used in reference to Lord Śiva?**

PURPORT: The word *apratipūruṣam,* used in this verse, means "one who has no equal." Lord Śiva has no equal in the material world in regard to equality towards everyone. His wife, Satī, knew that her husband was equal towards everyone, so why in this case was he so unkind to his wife that he did not allow her to go to her father's house? This distressed her more than she could tolerate, and she looked at her husband as if she were ready to blast him with her vision. In other words, since Lord Śiva is the *ātmā* (*śiva* also means *ātmā*), it is indicated here that Satī was prepared to commit suicide. Another meaning of the word *apratipūruṣa* is "the personality who has no rival." Since Lord Śiva could not be persuaded to give her permission, Satī took shelter of a woman's last weapon, weeping, which forces a husband to agree to the proposal of his wife.

3

ततो विनिःश्वस्य सती विहाय तं
शोकेन रोषेण च दूयता हृदा
पितुर्गात्स्त्रैणविमूढधीर्गृहान्
प्रेम्णात्मनो योऽर्धमदात्सतां प्रिय

tato viniḥśvasya satī vihāya ta
śokena roṣeṇa ca dūyatā hṛd
pitror agāt straiṇa-vimūḍha-dhīr gṛhā
premṇātmano yo 'rdham adāt satāṁ priyaḥ

tataḥ—then; *viniḥśvasya*—breathing very heavily; *satī*—Satī; *vihāya*—leaving; *tam*—him (Lord Śiva); *śokena*—by bereavement; *roṣeṇa*—by anger; *ca*—and; *dūyatā*—afflicted; *hṛdā*—with the heart; *pitroḥ*—of her father; *agāt*—she went; *straiṇa*—by her womanly nature; *vimūḍha*—deluded; *dhīḥ*—intelligence; *gṛhān*—to the house; *premṇā*—due to affection; *ātmanaḥ*—of his body; *yaḥ*—who; *ardham*—half; *adāt*—gave; *satām*—to the saintly; *priyaḥ*—dear.

Thereafter Satī left her husband, Lord Śiva, who had given her half his body due to affection. Breathing very heavily because of anger and bereavement, she went to the house of her father. This less intelligent act was due to her being a weak woman.

[*continued in the next issue*]

A Lifetime of Devotion To Guru and Krsna

A couple at the ISKCON community in Los Angeles prove that age is no obstacle for one who sincerely desires to serve the Lord.

by Karuṇa Dhāranī Devī Dāsī

Vársana Stazak

Mañjarī (left) and Vidura Mehta

THE HOME OF VIDURA and Mañjarī Mehta* smells like worship. A soft scent of ghee wicks and incense and camphor fills the clean, simple rooms. From where I live next door, I regularly hear the conch shell announcing their twice-daily *ārati* for their deities. Today, Rādhā-Gopīnātha, Gaura-Nitāi, and Laḍḍu-Gopāla are freshly bathed and immaculate, dressed in bright yellow-and-white cloth Mañjarī has sewn for Them. I offer my obeisances and take a seat as this couple, Vidura, 85, and Mañjarī, 83, recall for me their first encounter with Śrīla Prabhupāda and his Western disciples.

They were strolling along the Chowpatty shore, as they did every evening in Mumbai in 1971. There was not so much to see, just a

*"Vidura" and "Mañjarī" are the names they received at the time of their spiritual initiation.

Though the Mehtas had left India, they hadn't given up their spiritual heritage. They continued their personal spiritual practices.

• • • •

big stretch of beach and a few buildings. Yet that evening, in a large open area that was usually vacant, stood a big canopy with a group of men inside. They were wearing saffron, the color of cloth for a renunciant in the Mehta's Vedic culture. The men were dancing and were singing the names of Kṛṣṇa, an activity familiar to Vidura and Mañjarī, chanters themselves. But something was clearly different here. As they drew closer, they saw that it was foreigners who were singing. This they had never seen—Americans dressed in the traditional sacred robes of their own Hare Kṛṣṇa faith.

At first they couldn't believe what they were seeing. They stood with eyes fixed on the very enthusiastic *saṅkīrtana* before them. The crowd grew thick with surprised and curious onlookers.

"This is not a miracle."

Vidura remembers the strong voice of Śrīla Prabhupāda, standing outside the canopy and addressing the gathering crowd, gesturing toward his Western followers.

"I am not a miracle worker. These young Americans have become Vaiṣṇava devotees of the Lord."

A few days later Vidura and Mañjarī saw the same group of devotees at the nearby Mahā-Lakṣmī temple. They remember seeing a *sannyāsī* with a birthmark on the left side of his forehead. They couldn't have known then what significance this *sannyāsī* would someday have in their lives.

"For me, the Western devotees were a very good sight to see," says Vidura.

Vidura and Mañjarī were both born into Vaiṣṇava families and initiated in the Puṣṭī line of Vallabhācārya, an associate of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Mañjarī has worshiped Bāla (child) Kṛṣṇa since she was seven years old. She remembers that in her childhood her mother would go every day to worship at the Kuñja-Bihārī temple in her neighborhood at Devgad Baria, Panchmahal District, Gujarat.

Vidura received his education in Ahmedabad, and later he moved to Mumbai, where he worked in a bank and then became the manager of a rubber factory on Grant Road. Vidura was twenty-three and Mañjarī twenty when they married. They have two sons, Madhukar and Kamal. During their years of raising the boys, they visited local temples, taught their sons to chant and worship in their home, and kept up their Kṛṣṇa conscious practice of chanting on beads sixty-four rounds of the mantra *śrī kṛṣṇa śaraṇaṁ mama* ("Lord Kṛṣṇa is my shelter").

Every year they took the boys on pilgrimage to visit the popular temple of Lord Kṛṣṇa as Śrī Nāthajī, in Nathdwara, Rajasthan. When their sons graduated from high school and began college in Ahmedabad, Vidura and Mañjarī began a series of pilgrimages that took them to Gokula, Mathura, Vṛndāvana, Kedarnath, Badrinath, Haridwar, Rishikesh, Gangotri, Yamunotri, Tirupati, Madurai, Kanniyakumari, Māyāpur, Jagannath Puri, and other holy places.

Finding Their Guru In America

Madhukar, the eldest son, graduated in Ahmedabad with a degree in pharmaceutical studies, and he moved to Boston for six more years of education in his field. In 1982, when Vidura and Mañjarī visited him there, Madhukar brought them to attend the services at the Boston Hare Kṛṣṇa temple.

In the meantime their son Kamal took a job in architecture in Houston.

"We moved to Houston to be reunited with our son Kamal," says Vidura, "and we began to attend Kṛṣṇa conscious programs every Friday evening. Lecturing at these programs was Tamāl Kṛṣṇa Goswami. We recognized him as the same *sannyāsī* with the birthmark on his forehead whom we had seen twelve years before in Mumbai."

In Houston the Mehtas soon began their own spiritual home-programs, inviting friends and family to celebrate an evening of Kṛṣṇa conscious singing, speaking, and feasting. Kamal Mehta became active in putting on the programs every week for the benefit of friends, family, and members of the Houston ISKCON congregation. Though the Mehta's had left India, they hadn't given up their spiritual heritage. They continued their personal spiritual practices and added the spirit of giving Kṛṣṇa consciousness that was so evident to them in Śrīla Prabhupāda's discourses at Chowpatty.

Vidura and Mañjarī became initiated by Tamāl Kṛṣṇa Goswami in Houston in 1986. At the time of their initiation they were each chanting sixty-four rounds of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* as well as the mantra *śrī kṛṣṇa śaraṇaṁ mama* of the Puṣṭī line. Their son Kamal was later initiated by Lokanāth Swami and received the name Kṛṣṇa Prema Dāsa.

Eventually Kṛṣṇa Prema's architectural work took him to Tustin, California, near Los Angeles. Vidura and Mañjarī went with him and his wife, Gopi, to help take care of their three sons while the parents were at work. Every Saturday night all of the Mehtas attended ISKCON programs held in any of forty homes in southern California. (The various programs draw 150 families and include *bhajanas* that go on for well over three hours at every event. In the last few years the number of programs has more than doubled to include Friday nights as well as some Sunday afternoons.)

Nirantara Dāsa, the director of life membership and home programs for

ISKCON Los Angeles, asked Vidura to lead the opening *kīrtana* and offer the final *ārati* at every Saturday program. This required a lot of traveling to various homes, but Vidura, a very determined devotee of Kṛṣṇa, enjoyed his assigned duty at every event.

Dangerous Operation

In July 1996, Vidura was diagnosed with a lumbar disc disease called scoliosis, which severely afflicts the sciatic nerve. After five years, he was in great pain and confined to a wheelchair. His doctor suggested an operation but couldn't guarantee its success.

Vidura wrote to his guru, Tamāl Kṛṣṇa Goswami, for guidance, telling him that he was praying to Lord Kṛṣṇa to either let him die during the operation and take him back to the spiritual world or heal him for vigorous devotional service.

Tamāl Kṛṣṇa Goswami replied that, lacking medical expertise, he could not advise Vidura on whether or not to have the operation, but if Vidura did have it and recovered, he must remember to follow through on his promise to dedicate his life to Kṛṣṇa's service.

Vidura decided to have the six-hour operation. After six months of recuperation, he regained his ability to walk. He now lives at New Dwarka, the ISKCON community in Los Angeles. Nowadays we see Vidura early every morning before *maṅgala-ārati,* preparing trays for the morning worship. For the last six years, he has offered *maṅgala-ārati* every morning as well as the Sunday feast *ārati.* After the Sunday feast *ārati* Vidura helps Ravīndranātha Dāsa, the head priest, give a *prasādam* sweet to everyone who comes to the temple. For seven years Mañjarī has made the full supply of ghee wicks for the deity worship: five hundred tapered wicks and five hundred lamp wicks every week. They each chant daily thirty-two rounds of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* on their beads.

Inspiring Others

"Since the passing of Tamāl Kṛṣṇa Goswami," says Vidura, "we have missed him very heavily. He loved us and treated us like his parents. We now feel like orphans in his absence."

Tamāl Kṛṣṇa Goswami once told him, "Vidura, I have done my duty to you, and now it is your turn to do your duty to me."

Vidura humbly asked, "Gurudeva, what is my duty to you?"

Tamāl Kṛṣṇa Goswami replied, "Please bless me. You are my parents."

"Vidura is a very determined, forceful, and principled devotee," says Nirantara, who has known him for fifteen years. "He takes his service very seriously. His dream is that he and his wife will pass away at the same time while doing service to Śrī Śrī Rukmiṇī-Dvārakādhīśa. Mañjarī is the universal mother. Nothing pleases her more than to cook for and feed devotees."

They are both very fond of their devotee grandchildren. Three generations of Mehtas engage in Kṛṣṇa's service. All three of the Mehta grandsons took the *Kṛṣṇa* book home-study program administered by Nirantara Dāsa, and they graduated with high honors. They attend home programs and enjoy singing, and they play the harmonium and drums. They also help with life membership and the office that organizes the home programs. They live in New Dwarka and attend college at nearby UCLA and USC.

"New Dwarka is a very spiritual atmosphere," says Nisanth, who is studying to be a doctor. "I can really feel the difference when I come back to the community here. We visit the deities daily and like to do some service."

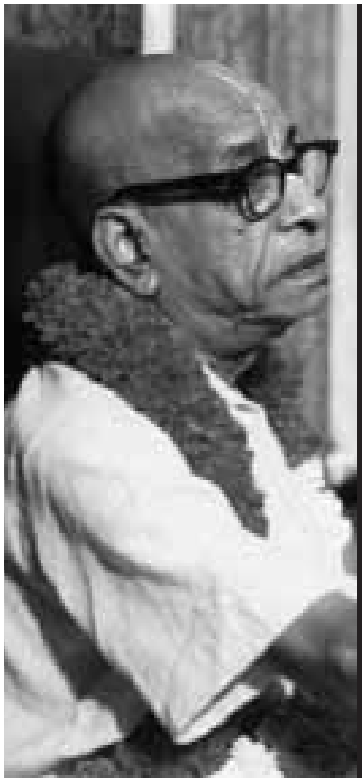
Anand, who is pursuing a degree in communications, adds, "And we get to see our grandpa. We feel inspired to see our grandparents serving Kṛṣṇa in their advanced age."

I too am inspired by the example of Vidura and Mañjarī Mehta, including their life-long worship and chanting and their training of their family members to be Kṛṣṇa conscious.

Vidura wrote in a letter to his guru, "Please let me tell you that I have experienced profound happiness and joy while doing *ārati* at several ISKCON temples."

Steady devotional service to the Lord in the later years of life is a reward for those who have paid the price of surrender to guru and Kṛṣṇa. Next stop, Kṛṣṇa-loka.

Karuṇa Dhārinī Devī Dāsī, a disciple of His Grace Vīrabāhu Dāsa, serves the deities at New Dwarka, where she joined ISKCON in 1979. She lives with her husband and daughter.



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THE HOLY NAME

(*continued from page 13*)

Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare —it is the Lord and His supreme energy, Rādhā. The word *Hare* is the way to call someone named either Hari (masculine, a name for Kṛṣṇa) or Harā (feminine, a name for Rādhārāṇī). Śrīla Prabhupāda told us that we are calling to the supreme mother, Harā, to help us approach the Lord, Kṛṣṇa or Rāma. Kṛṣṇa means all-attractive, an appropriate name for God because He is the strongest and the most wealthy, renounced, famous, beautiful, and intelligent—the primary categories of opulence. And Rāma is a name for God as the supreme enjoyer, full of pleasure. *Harā* literally means "to take away." Rādhārāṇī, addressed as Hare, takes away the pain of material attachments and brings us to Kṛṣṇa. She also steals Kṛṣṇa's mind, attracting the most attractive with her incomparable love. The *mahā-mantra* is thus an exultation of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's love and a plea to Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa to allow the chanter to help further the unlimited expansion of Their love.

Many great spiritual teachers have given their own meditations on the name and the *mahā-mantra,* all in accord with the basic understanding above. Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, for example, explained that each couplet of the mantra refers to one of the eight prayers (*Śikṣāṣṭaka*) written by the Lord to Himself when, as Caitanya Mahāprabhu, He appeared in the mood of Rādhārāṇī. Bhaktivinoda further says that each of these couplets and prayers corresponds to a stage in the gradual progress of realization of a spiritual aspirant.

"GO TO GOVINDA!"

Kṛṣṇa may find many ways to convince us of the name's power. My mother's passing was a powerful lesson for me.

My many relatives who had vehemently objected to "Kṛṣṇa rituals," both directly and through the doctor, suddenly and inexplicably left the room after declaring that they would stay "until the end." As I sat with my mother, another devotee entered the room and began chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa to her, not knowing she had only moments left.

The aide sat on one side, saying, "Just go to the Lord, just love the Lord!" And I sat on the other, describing Kṛṣṇa's form and singing songs of the spiritual world. My mother's body shuddered as if someone had grabbed the stem of a large plant within her and shaken it. For several weeks, she'd been unable to speak, even though her consciousness had been clear and alert. Was it her inner desire that had set the stage for hearing only Kṛṣṇa's glories? Would my relatives come back and accuse me of sectarian rituals? Would she go on like this for days, with the chance that I could be out of the room at the moment the soul left? Leaving all this up to Kṛṣṇa, I told her of His beautiful hair, His eyes, and His love.

"Go to Govinda! Go to Gopāla! Give Him all your love and everything. Leave your material attachments and become attached only to Him. *Rādhe Jaya Jaya, Mādhava.* Go to Gopāla!"

Her breathing stopped. Then a tiny bit of air came from her mouth, and her body was still. Could one whose life had no background of Vedic ritual come to Kṛṣṇa through the power of His name, even in the last moments? I'm still astonished at how the holy name is so merciful and how Kṛṣṇa in that form is above all considerations.

The phone rang.

"How is Grandma?" my daughter asked.

"Grandma just died. One minute ago."

"One minute ago? One minute ago I was at the altar, begging Lord Caitanya to protect her."

With faith in the power of the name, with awareness that Kṛṣṇa in that form is fully present with all potencies, and with conviction that the names includes and is beyond all else, let us chant with enthusiasm.

Ūrmilā Devī Dāsī and her family run a school in North Carolina. She is a frequent contributor to BTG *and the major author and compiler of* Vaikuṇṭha Children, *a guide to Kṛṣṇa*

You're Invited!

The Sunday Feast

Most Hare Kṛṣṇa centers around the world put on a special festival every Sunday—for regulars as well as newcomers. Come by and relish the taste of the world's oldest cultural tradition. Call your nearest center to find out the schedule for the Sunday Feast. (See "Centers," pages 59–61.)

Glossary

Ācārya—a spiritual master who teaches by example.

Balarāma—Lord Kṛṣṇa's first expansion, who acts in the role of Lord Kṛṣṇa's elder brother.

Battle of Kurukshetra—an epic battle for rule of the world, fought five thousand years ago.

Bhagavad-gītā—the sacred book in which Lord Kṛṣṇa gives the essence of knowledge to His friend and disciple Arjuna.

Bhakti—devotional service to the Supreme Lord.

Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura—the spiritual master of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

Bhakti-yoga—linking with the Supreme Lord through devotional service.

Caitanya Mahāprabhu—the incarnation of Lord Kṛṣṇa who appeared five hundred years ago to teach the chanting of the names of God as the religion for the present age.

Dharma—(1) ordained duties or religious principles; (2) one's eternal, natural occupation (i.e., devotional service to the Lord).

Godhead—the Absolute Truth, the Supreme Reality, progressively realized first as the impersonal all-pervasive oneness, more fully as the Supersoul within the heart of every living being, and ultimately as the all-opulent Supreme Person.

Gurukula—a school where children learn the philosophy and practices of Kṛṣṇa consciousness along with regular academic subjects (literally "the place of the guru").

Hare Kṛṣṇa—the great mantra Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

ISKCON—the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

Japa—individual chanting of names of God, usually while counting on beads.

Kali-yuga—in the endlessly repeated cycle of four cosmic ages, the present and worst age, the Age of Quarrel, of which 5,000 of 432,000 years have passed.

Karma—material action; its inevitable reaction; or the law by which such action and reaction are governed.

Kīrtana—congregational singing of names of God, usually accompanied by cymbals (*karatālas*) and drums (*mṛdaṅgas*).

Kṛṣṇa—the Supreme Personality of Godhead in His original transcendental form (see "Godhead").

Mahābhārata—the epic history of ancient India, a history in which the *Bhagavad-gītā* appears as the most important and well-known text.

Māyā—illusion; the energy of the Supreme Lord that deludes living entities into forgetting their spiritual nature and forgetting God.

Māyāvādī—one who regards the Absolute Truth as ultimately impersonal.

Modes of nature—the three qualities (goodness, passion, and ignorance) that hold sway over all action in the material world.

Nityānanda—the incarnation of Lord Balarāma who appeared with Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Prasādam—vegetarian food that has been prepared for the Lord and offered to Him with devotion (literally "mercy").

Purāṇas—Vedic histories.

Rādhārāṇī—Lord Kṛṣṇa's consort and pleasure potency.

Rathayātrā—"chariot festival": a festival in which the form of Kṛṣṇa is borne in procession on a large canopy-topped chariot or float, especially the festival originating in Puri, India, for Jagannātha (Lord Kṛṣṇa, "the Lord of the universe").

Sannyāsa—the renounced life of a man who relinquishes home to dedicate himself fully to the Supreme.

Śrī—an honorific meaning "opulent" (similarly: Śrīla, Śrīmad, Śrīmān, Śrīmatī).

Śrīla Prabhupāda—His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam—the most important of the eighteen *Purāṇas,* which tells of the nature and pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa and His devotees.

Supersoul—the form of the Lord who resides in every heart along with the individual soul.

Upaniṣads—the 108 essential philosophical treatises that appear within the *Vedas.*

Varṇāśrama—the Vedic social system. It organizes society into four occupational and four spiritual divisions (*varṇas* and *āśramas*). The members of the four *varṇas* are the *brāhmaṇas* (intellectuals and priests), the *kṣatriyas* (administrators and soldiers), the *vaiśyas* (farmers and businessmen), and the *śūdras* (laborers and artisans). The members of the four *āśramas* are the *brahmacārīs* (celibate students), *gṛhasthas* (married people), *vānaprasthas* (retired people), and *sannyāsīs* (renunciants).

Vṛndāvana—the transcendental abode of Lord Kṛṣṇa, mirrored on earth as the town in India where Kṛṣṇa appeared five thousand years ago.

Vaiṣṇava—a devotee of the Supreme Lord (from the word *Viṣṇu*).

Vedas—the hymns of knowledge revealed by the Lord Himself at the beginning of creation.

Vedic—pertaining to the culture in which the *Vedas* and related scriptures guide all aspects of human life.

Viṣṇu—any form of the Personality of Godhead (see

ENLIGHTENING THE BUDDHISTS

During Lord Caitanya's travels, He would sometimes meet with proud intellectuals who did not believe that God was a person. They thought He was merely a principle or a power or a light or a consciousness or all of these combined. One of these persons, a leader of a Buddhist sect, along with his disciples, once came before the Lord to instruct Him. Setting forth nine chief principles, the Buddhist tried to convince the Lord of the superiority of his teachings. But with strong logic the Lord easily defeated the Buddhist leader's arguments. When spectators began to laugh, the Buddhists felt both shame and fear. Realizing that the Lord was a Vaiṣṇava—a devotee of Kṛṣṇa—they unhappily returned home.

Later, the Buddhists plotted to avenge themselves. They brought the Lord a plate of untouchable food and falsely called it *mahā-prasāda,* food that has been first offered to the temple deity. But just when this food was presented to Lord Caitanya, a large bird appeared there, picked up the plate in its beak, and flew off. As it did, the untouchable food fell on the Buddhists; then the bird dropped the plate on the head of the Buddhist teacher, and the teacher fell down unconscious.

His students cried out and hastened to Lord Caitanya's feet for shelter.

Addressing Him as the Lord, they begged, "Sir, please forgive our offense. Please have mercy on us and revive our spiritual master."

The Lord replied, "All of you chant the names of Kṛṣṇa and Hari very loudly near the ear of your guru. By this means, he will regain consciousness."

The students followed the Lord's advice, and their teacher became conscious. He at once began chanting the holy name of the Lord and then submitted himself humbly before Lord Caitanya. Everyone gathered there was amazed.

The Lord then suddenly and strangely disappeared from everyone's view, and no one could find Him.

REPELLING THE BHAṬṬATHĀRIS

While Lord Caitanya traveled to various holy places, He was accompanied by His servant Kṛṣṇadāsa. One day Kṛṣṇadāsa, who was simple and gentle, was lured away from the Lord by a group of nomads known as the Bhaṭṭathāris. Outwardly, they dressed like *sannyāsīs,* or renunciants, but their real business was stealing and cheating. Polluting Kṛṣṇadāsa's intelligence, they persuaded him to come to their camp and enjoy their kept women. Their motive was to compel Kṛṣṇadāsa to join their community and become one of their members.

As soon as the Lord learned of this, he went to their camp and asked them, "Why are you keeping my *brāhmaṇa* assistant? Both you and I are renunciants, yet you are deliberately distressing me. I do not see any good logic in this."

Hearing this, all the Bhaṭṭathāris proceeded to try to attack the Lord, their sharp weapons raised maliciously. But instead of striking the Lord's body, their weapons uncontrollably fell from their hands and struck their own bodies. When some of the Bhaṭṭathāris were thus cut to pieces, the others ran away in all directions. As the Bhaṭṭathāris roared and cried, Lord Caitanya grabbed Kṛṣṇadāsa by the hair and took him away. Later on, when Kṛṣṇadāsa realized how he had been contaminated, he was most grateful to the Lord for freeing him from those rogues.

DISPATCHING SEVEN TREES

Many thousands of years ago, Lord Caitanya incarnated as the famous Lord Rāma. In Vālmīki's great epic *Rāmāyaṇa*, Lord Rāma, a mighty warrior, promised Prince Sugrīva that He would kill Sugrīva's brother King Vāli, who had not only banished Sugrīva from his kingdom, but had also illicitly appropriated his wife. But because Vāli was extremely powerful, Sugrīva entertained a doubt as to whether Lord Rāma could slay him. Therefore, Sugrīva asked Lord Rāma to prove His prowess by shooting an arrow into a distant tree. After Rāma shot His arrow, it pierced not only the indicated tree but also six other trees standing behind it. The arrow then touched the earth and quickly returned to Lord Rāma's quiver.

When Lord Caitanya toured south India, He saw those same trees that He, in the form of Lord Rāma, had long ago pierced with His arrow. But now playing the role of a devotee, He considered those trees extremely holy, having had contact with the Lord's mystic arrow. Lord Caitanya then embraced each of them, causing all seven trees to disappear. Where did they go? The Lord dispatched them to Vaikuṇṭha, the spiritual world, freeing the souls occupying them from ever having to take birth again in the material world.

Amala Bhakta Dāsa, well-known for his audio recordings of Kṛṣṇa conscious books, is the author of The Life of Tul-asi Devi, Mystical Stories from the Mahabharata, *and* Mystical Stories from the Srimad-Bhagavatam.

Gatherings

The people listed here hold Kṛṣṇa conscious gatherings regularly in their homes—or they'd like to start. You're invited. Just give a call to find out when and where. If you hold Kṛṣṇa conscious gatherings and you'd like to be added to the list, please send your name, city, and phone number to Gatherings, BTG, P. O. Box 430, Alachua, FL 32616, USA. NOTE: If you find that a listing is no longer valid, please let us know.

USA

CALIFORNIA: Southern California — For all cities in Los Angeles County, San Fernando Valley, and Orange County, call Nirantara Dāsa at (310) 839-1572, nirantara@juno.com; **Alpine** — Rādhānātha Dāsa, (619) 659-5728; **Avalon** — Śyāmasundara Dāsa, (310) 510-0288 [Radio program on 88.7 FM, Tuesdays 8:00–10:00 P.M.]; **Burlingame** — Vaiśeṣika Dāsa & Nirākula Devī Dāsī, (650) 344-2446; ***Davis —** Kalpana Singh; (530) 759-7082; **Lancaster** — Premāmṛta Dāsī, (661)942-1859; ***Modesto —** Caitanya Caritāmṛta Dāsa & Subhadrā Devī Dāsī, (209) 548-0439; **Newbury Park —** Mahāśakti Dāsa, (805) 480-9215, mjahre@adelphia.net; **Ojai** — *Māyeśvara Dāsa (805) 640-0405, mayesvara@aol.com; Urvaśī Devī Dāsī, (805) 646-7572; **Penn Valley** — Rick & Judy Gross, (530) 432-0854; (714) 996-7262; **Redwood Valley** — Prasanna Yoga Ashram (Īkṣvāku Dāsa), (707) 485-5592; **Sacramento** — *Paradhyeya Dāsa & Caitanya Devī Dāsī, (916) 568-1401, paradyeya.acbsp@pamho.net; Gaṇapati Dāsa & Mālatī Devī Dāsī, (916) 929-4557; **San Jose/Santa Cruz** — Akrūranātha Dāsa & Jagariṇī Devī Dāsī, (408) 353-9099; **Visalia** — Nagapatni Devi Dasi, (559) 734-4463, nagapatni@aol.com

***CONNECTICUT: Milford —** Harish & Simmi, simmi_z@hotmail.com

FLORIDA: Orlando — ISKCON Sunday Program, Shanti Mandir, [call Dīpa: (407) 788-7009]; Jaya Śila Dāsa, (407) 290-1956; ***Plantation** — Joe Gennaro (Jaya Kṛṣṇa Dāsa), (954) 693-0566, gunner108@aol.com; ***Tampa Bay Area —** Prema Sindhu Dāsa & Līlā Mañjarī Devī Dāsī, (727) 585-5372, lilamanjari@verizon.net

GEORGIA: Atlanta (Gypsy Market) — Mādhava Priya Devī Dāsī or Bhakta Christopher, (404) 584-0987; **Norcross** — Gītā Govinda Dāsa & Gītā Devī Dāsī, (770) 448-7556

HAWAII: Waimanalo Bay — Above Heaven's Gate, (808) 259-5429

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IOWA: Iowa City — Gopāla Dāsa & Kalāvatī Devī Dāsī, dasgopal@aol.com

KANSAS: Lawrence — Aṅkottha Dāsa & Gopīmātā Devī Dāsī, (785) 594-7091

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UNITED KINGDOM: Regular gatherings take place in more than 20 cities.

*New or revised listing.

THE SONG GOES EVER ON

(*continued from page 27)*

asking appropriate questions: "On the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra," Kṛṣṇa says, "Arjuna . . . asked Me the same question that you are now posing." After this reference to His conversation with Arjuna, Kṛṣṇa explains how He can be seen in the world and, nearly echoing His own words in the *Bhagavad-gītā's* Tenth Chapter, enumerates His opulences as the Absolute Truth: "I am the ultimate goal . . . I am the three-lettered *oṁkāra* . . . I am the Gāyatrī mantra . . . I am the Himālayas," and so on. He adds several that are not in the *Gītā,* such as "Among jewels, I am the ruby, and among flowers the lotus."

The next two chapters of the *Uddhava Gītā* detail the ancient social and spiritual system known as Varṇāśrama Dharma. Krsna makes it clear, as He does in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, that one fits into this system according to quality and work, not birth (as in the modern-day caste system). The original system is meant to help practitioners use their God-given talents and inclinations to gradually become God conscious.

DIFFERENT INSTRUCTIONS FOR DIFFERENT STUDENTS

As the *Uddhava Gītā* comes to a close, Kṛṣṇa again emphasizes the importance of *bhakti-yoga,* or devotion to Him, and makes two additional points: (1) He asks Uddhava to try to see the Supreme Soul, Kṛṣṇa Himself, in all living beings and at all times. There is a spiritual oneness to all things, Kṛṣṇa tells Uddhava, and yet He—God—remains a distinct and transcendent individual as well. This is the great mystery of spiritual life. (2) Kṛṣṇa tells Uddhava to renounce the world and accept the life of a mendicant. Students of the *Bhagavad-gītā* will notice that this instruction seems diametrically opposed to that given to Arjuna. In the *Bhagavad-gītā,* Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna to unhesitatingly fight on behalf of the righteous. In other words, Kṛṣṇa tells him to work in the world for a divine purpose, on God's behalf, not to renounce all action and sit on his laurels like a would-be yogi.

Is Kṛṣṇa contradicting Himself by telling Uddhava to become a renunciant, to shy away from worldly activities? Not in the slightest. Arjuna was a warrior, in the middle of a battle, and many were depending on him to do his duty. But Uddhava's temperament was different. He was inclined to the mood of the *gopīs.* [See the sidebar "Uddhava Sandeśa."] The teachings of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, as delivered in both the *Bhagavad-gītā* and the *Uddhava Gītā,* take each person's unique psychophysical make-up into account, celebrating the diversity of creation and the special way in which each of us is meant to serve God.

In the last verse of *Uddhava Gītā* (11.29.49), Śukadeva Goswami, the narrator of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* feels intense love for the Lord and utters the following words:

> I offer my obeisances to that Supreme Personality of Godhead, the original and greatest of all beings, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. He is the author of the *Vedas,* and just to destroy His devotees' fear of material existence, like a bee He has collected this nectarean essence of all knowledge and self-realization. Thus He has awarded to His many devotees this nectar from the ocean of bliss, and by His mercy they have drunk it.

Satyarāja Dāsa is a disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda and a regular contributor to BTG. *He has written twenty books on Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and is the editor of the recently published* Holy War: Violence and the Bhagavad Gita. *He lives with his wife and daughter near New York City.*

Uddhava's Gratitude

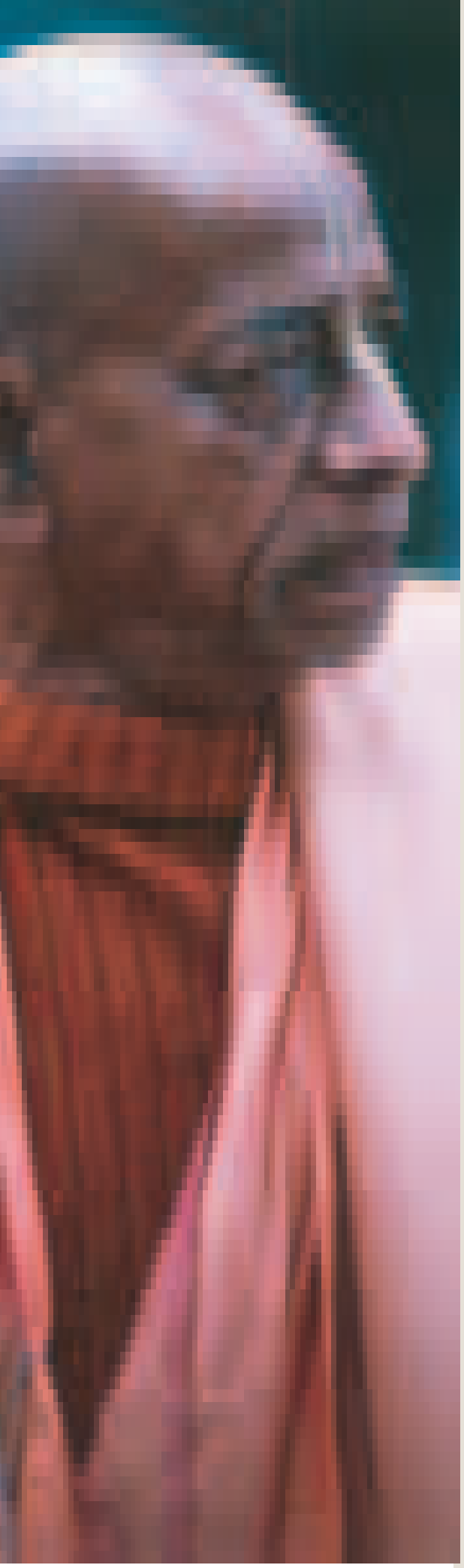
ŚUKADEVA GOSVĀMĪ said: Hearing the words spoken by Lord Kṛṣṇa, and having thus been shown the entire path of yoga, Uddhava folded his hands to offer obeisances. But his throat choked up with love and his eyes overflowed with tears; so he could say nothing.

Steadying his mind, which had become overwhelmed with love, Uddhava felt extremely grateful to Lord Kṛṣṇa, the greatest hero of the Yadu dynasty. My dear King Parīkṣit, Uddhava bowed down to touch the Lord's lotus feet with his head and then spoke with folded hands.

Śrī Uddhava said: O unborn, primeval Lord, although I had fallen into the darkness of illusion, my ignorance has now been dispelled by Your merciful association. Indeed, how can cold, darkness, and fear exert their power over one who has approached the brilliant sun?

In return for my insignificant surrender, You have mercifully bestowed upon me, Your servant, the torchlight of transcendental knowledge. Therefore, what devotee of Yours who has any gratitude could ever give up Your lotus feet and take shelter of another master?

—Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.29.35–38



"Education Means To Know God"

Here we continue a conversation between His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and the mother of one of his students, along with a Jesuit priest. It took place in the garden at Bhaktivedanta Manor, near London, England, on July 25, 1973.

Mother (to Śrīla Prabhupāda)**:** Yes, Father, I understand you are educated on a different platform, as you say—no doubt a most sublime and spiritual platform. But aren't you still drawing upon your basic educational background for translating your books?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. That's all right.

Mother: Isn't that a great joy to you?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: For translating of books, it does not require so much education. Of course, that is required when the purport of the translation is given. Otherwise, the real thing is culture. The essence of education is culture. Simply money-making education for maintaining this body—that education will not satisfy any more. Just as I told you: Despite all arrangements for education, why are the young men turning out to be hippies? That is my question.

Mother: Oh, but not your followers. Your followers are not being hippies—people who follow you. Therefore, you've got the people whom you could help to become cultured like you.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: So my father educated me in a different way. Therefore, I have come to this stage. My father never allowed me even to drink tea.

Mother: Well, I'm disappointed in you. I came to see you because I felt that, being so cultured, you would want all your boys to have this culture and to have this, to have the best…

Disciple: Thanks to Śrīla Prabhupāda, we've got this culture.

Mother: Oh, but you haven't, you see. You're all young boys.

Disciple: No. Your culture we don't have.

Mother: But you're not mature yet.

Disciple: But the culture that Śrīla Prabhupāda has—this culture he's giving to us.

Mother: Yes. But you're not mature. It takes years to be-come mature. Hurt, pain, happiness, everything together. You find God? Yes, I've found God. We all… I feel very close to God, and I feel very happy. But I would also still wish to be educated. And fortunately, I was given the chance to have an education, and I don't misuse it.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Education means to know God. That is education. In our Vedic culture, the high-class man is called a *brāhmaṇa*.

Mother: Yes.

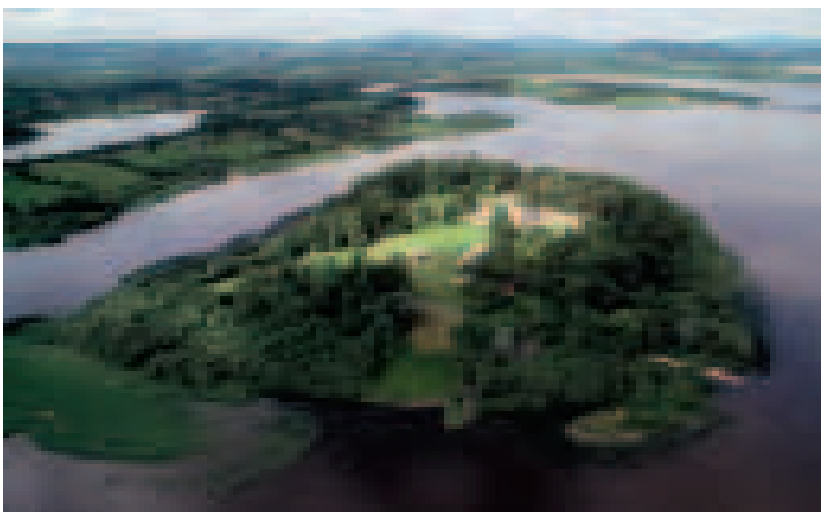
Śrīla Prabhupāda: *Brāhmaṇa*. You know that.

Mother: *Brāhmaṇa*. Yes.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: So who is a *brāhmaṇa*? One who knows

(*please turn to page 56*)

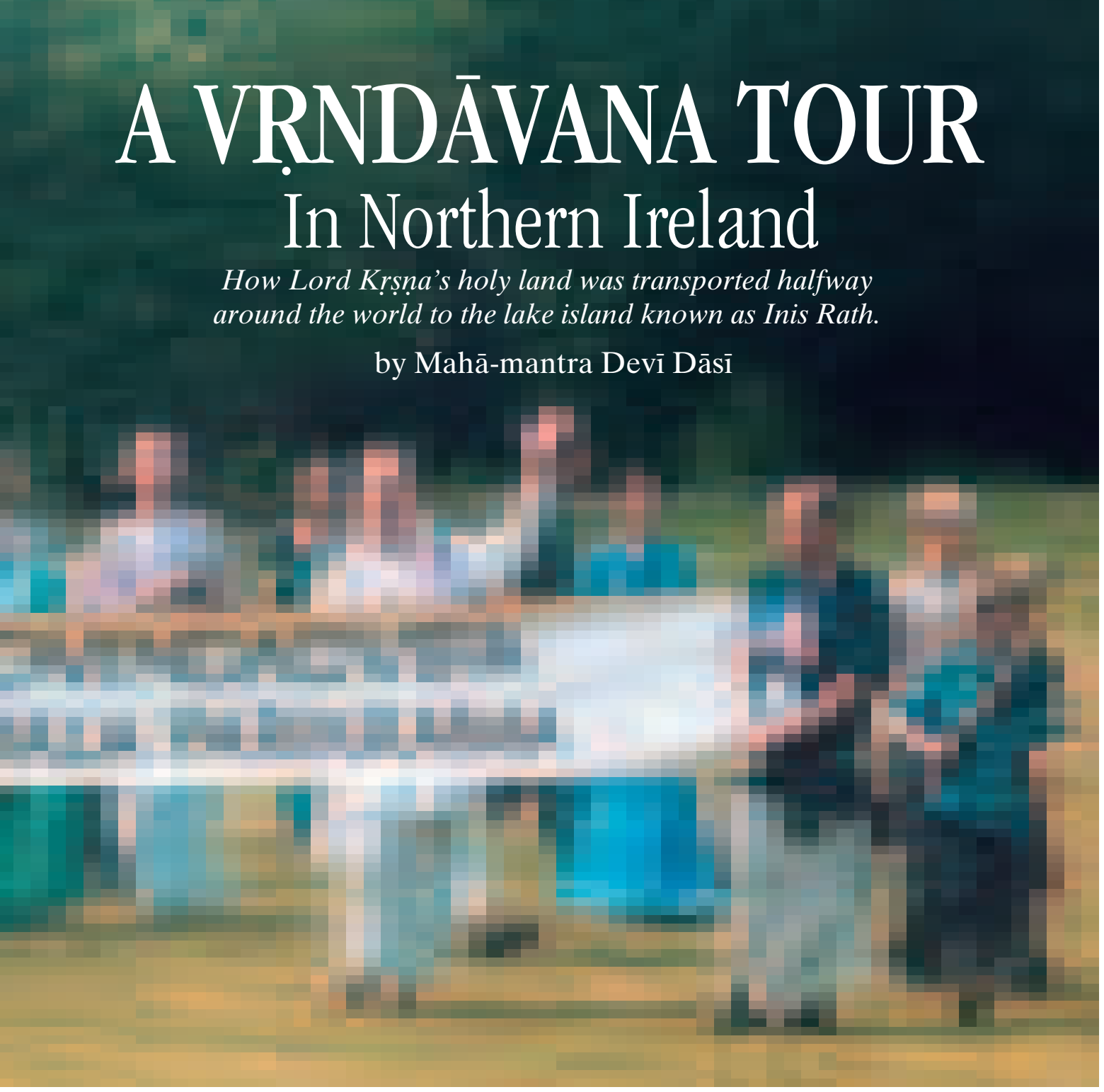
Processional deities of Rādhā-Govinda, along with residents and guests at Inis Rath (above), launch the first annual pilgrimage to the newly constructed replicas of Vṛndāvana's holy sites. At right: the lake island of Inis Rath in Northern Ireland.



A VṚNDĀVANA TOUR
In Northern Ireland

How Lord Kṛṣṇa's holy land was transported halfway around the world to the lake island known as Inis Rath.

by Mahā-mantra Devī Dāsī



GOVINDADVIPA, ISKCON's 22-acre island in Northern Ireland, has been home for the deities Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda since 1986. I first laid eyes on Rādhā-Govinda in 1985, before They were formally installed in the temple, and from that moment on, They made arrangements to draw me into their service. I moved into the temple community on January 7, 1986. Rādhā-Govinda were installed soon after, and I was allowed to take care of them.

My spiritual master, Satsvarūpa Dāsa Goswami, instructed me to make sure to read Śrīla Prabhupāda's books even if my heavy schedule of service to Rādhā-Govinda made it difficult. He said that the reading would help me understand that Rādhā-Govinda are not just statues standing on the altar; They are Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, and They have Their pastimes.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's book *Kṛṣṇa* contains many of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, and that book has always attracted me. I find that when I read it the pastimes enter my mind. And going to Their holy land in India has allowed the pastimes to enter my heart.

Besides my regular service to Rādhā-Govinda, I've been fortunate to go twelve times to Vṛndāvana for

ISKCON's annual Vraja Maṇḍala Parikramā, a one-month tour of the holy places of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. I've seen proof that Rādhā-Govinda don't just stand on the altar; I've seen Govinda's footprints on top of Charan Pahari in Kamyavana, one of the twelve forests of Vṛndāvana (Vraja), and I've seen the imprint of Rādhā's crown at Surya Kund.

My Dream For Govindadvipa

Much of the beautiful island of Govindadvipa (also known as Inis Rath) is covered by forest, and being surrounded by water, it resembles Vṛndāvana, where the Yamuna River flows. Early in 2003, our temple president, Manu Dāsa, asked the devotees here to write down what they feel is the purpose of Govindadvipa.

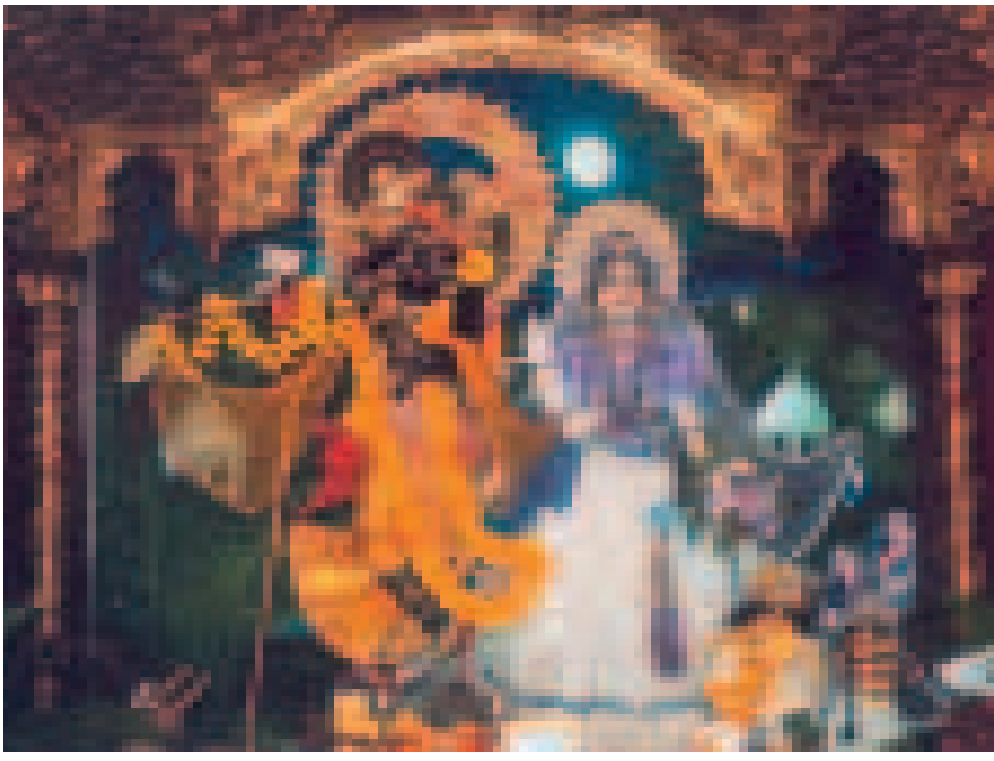
"And you can dream," he added.

So I wrote him my dream for Govindadvipa, which was to turn the island into a replica of the twelve forests of Vṛndāvana, with signposts, figures depicting the pastimes, and ghats on the lake.

When Manu read it, he was very

Mathurā Mohana Dāsa (left), from Māyāpur, India, cuts vegetation to reveal Kaliya Ghat and the tree Lord Kṛṣṇa jumped from to subdue the serpent Kāliya. At right, Kṛṣṇa prepares to jump from the tree at Kaliya Ghat.

After the ribbon cutting ceremony (left), the Parikramā trail is officially open. Below, on Lord Balarāma's appearance day, Rādhā-Govinda in the temple are dressed for Their Vṛndāvana pastimes.



encouraging: "Go for it. Just do it."

I drew a map of the island with the pastime places on it and put it on the temple notice board, petitioning devotees to contribute toward it. A little money came, and I bought a vanload of wood. My artist friend Śyāma Priyā Dāsī painted on the wood many four-foot-tall figures performing pastimes. They were then cut out and heavily varnished. Another artist, Caitanya-candra Dayā Dāsa, came forward and volunteered to paint more figures. He also designed the wooden roof structures and taught Girirāja Dāsa how to make them. So we did a few. Then more money came, and we did some more. In the end we had sixty signposts and twenty-five sets of figures under roofs around the island. Devotees worked very hard. Līlā Vṛndāvana Dāsī would put her baby to bed, then go into the art room and paint names on signs all night.

Walking around the island and finding the pastime places became a wonderful meditation. It started to be that nothing on Govindadvipa was ordinary anymore. When I found an old stone structure that resembled the grinding mortar from Kṛṣṇa's pastimes at Gokula, I put it in our Gokula beside the figures of Kṛṣṇa and Yaśodā, His mother. It had been outside the temple for years, but now it was definitely "the grinding mortar."

Govindadvipa Parikramā

In August, we had our second "Rādhā-Govinda's Vṛndāvana Pastimes Seminar" for three days, starting on Lord Balarāma's appearance day. Dīna Bandhu Dāsa, one of the tour guides for the Vraja Maṇḍala Parikramā, came all the way from Vṛndāvana to give the seminar. Over the three days, Rādhā-Govinda were dressed in five different pastime outfits. Dīna Bandhu spoke about the pastimes, and devotees performed a drama /dance depicting each one.

On the first day, Dīna Bandhu cut

At Chir Ghat (right), Parikramā guide Dīna Bandhu Dāsa reads about Lord Kṛṣṇa's stealing the clothes of the gopīs, His dearest devotees. At right, Mathurā Mohana Dāsa and Mahā-mantra Devī Dāsī (the author) put up one of the sixty sign posts. Below, chief artist Śyāma Priyā Devī Dāsī, from England, gets help from Śacītanaya Dāsa, visiting from Los Angeles.

the ribbon to officially open Govinda-dvipa's *parikramā* path. In the first forest, Madhuvana, he spoke about the pastimes that had taken place there. He said that Kṛṣṇa appeared in Madhuvana in each of the four Vedic ages: Satya, Tretā, Dvāpara, and Kali. We saw the figure of Dhruva Maharaja receiving the audience of Lord Nārāyaṇa, which happened in Satya-yuga. Further into the forest was the cave of Lavanāsura, who in Tretā-yuga was killed there by Śatrughna, Lord Rāma's brother. Then we saw Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma coming to water their cows at Krishna Kund, which happened in Dvāpara-yuga, and the figure of Lord Caitanya, who performed Vraja *parikramā* in Kali-yuga.

In the second forest, Tālavana, we saw the figure of Lord Balarāma and a big stuffed donkey demon—Dhenukāsura. Dīna Bandhu invited the children to beat up Dhenukāsura. Then at the appropriate time in the story the donkey flew through the air, flung by Balarāma, and landed in a tall tree. (Special effects by Rādhānātha Dāsa.)

And so we went, completing one third of the *parikramā* each day, fully enlivened by Dina Bandhu's dynamic

delivery of the nectar pastimes.

Vṛndāvana Everywhere

Śrīla Prabhupāda said that all our temples are Vṛndāvana, because wherever Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are, that is Vṛndāvana. Everything contained in the twelve forests of Vraja is available to us at our Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa temples. The scriptures reinforce this point by explaining that Rādhā decided to accompany Kṛṣṇa to earth only after He had agreed to bring Vṛndāvana with Them from the spiritual world. Since Rādhā has appeared in our temples, we can be sure that Vṛndāvana is there too.

Kṛṣṇa fulfilled my dream for Govindadvipa. But I'm not done dreaming yet. I want to increase and improve the figures over the next few years. I want to see stone figures under concrete roof structures, and I want to see stone ghats. But already, a walk around Govindadvipa will never be the same again.

Mahā-mantra Devī Dāsī has been serving Rādhā-Govinda at Govindadvipa and making outfits for them since she joined ISKCON in 1986. Readers interested in helping develop Govindadvipa Parikramā with donations or sculpturing talents can e-mail govindadwipa@pamho.net.

At Gokula (above), Yaśodā binds Kṛṣṇa to a grinding mortar. At left, the witch Pūtanā was the first demon killed by Lord Kṛṣṇa. Above, right, Lord Kṛṣṇa massages Rādhārāṇī's feet in the sacred grove known as Seva Kunj. At right, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, one of the chief disciples of Caitanya Mahāprabhu, resided at Ter Kadamba, outside Nandagram.

Padayātrā America

Depending on Krsna

A husband-and-wife team set out on a journey across America, armed with Kṛṣṇa's message and a strong faith in His protection.

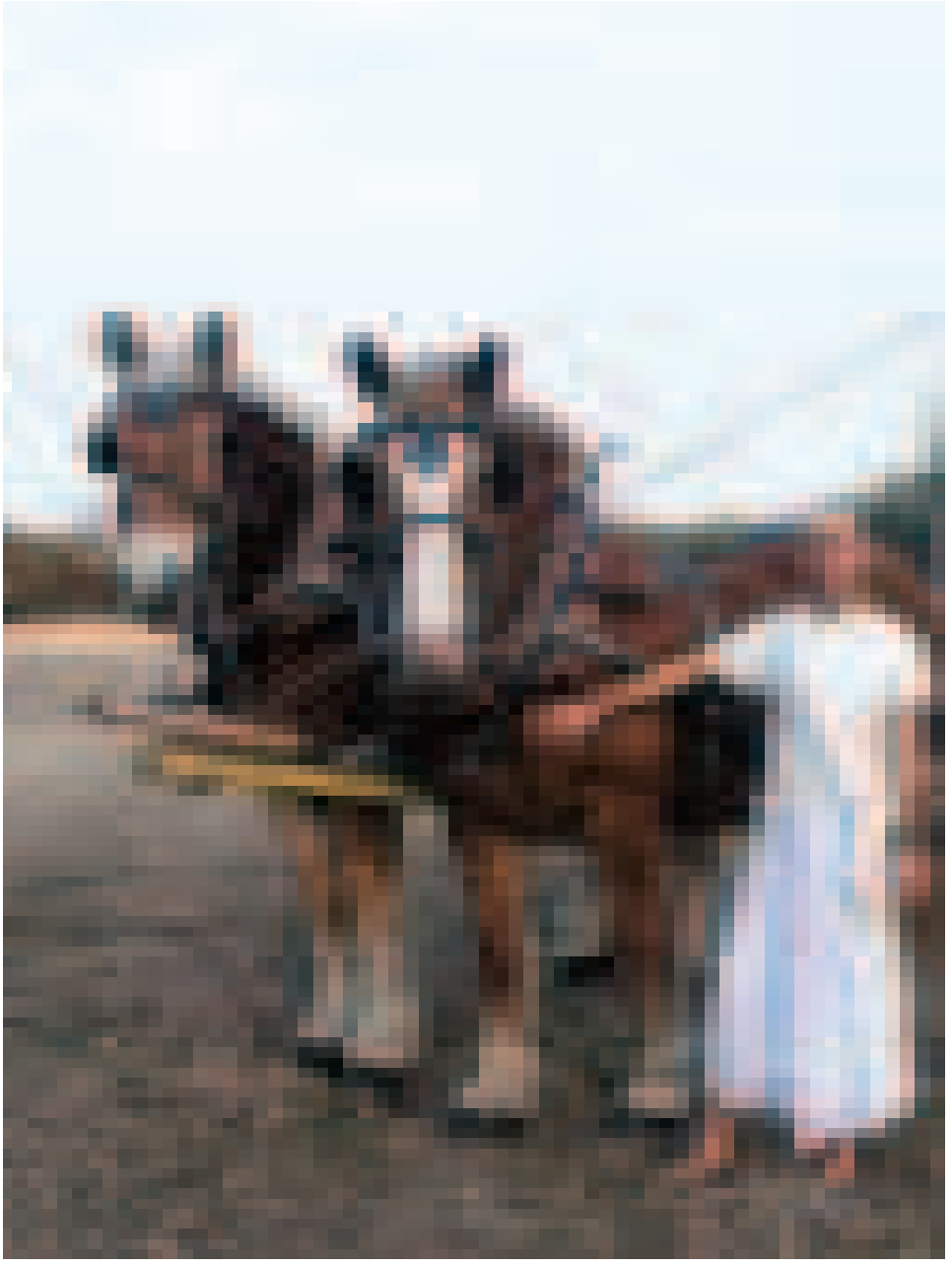
by Avadhūta Śiromaṇi Dāsa

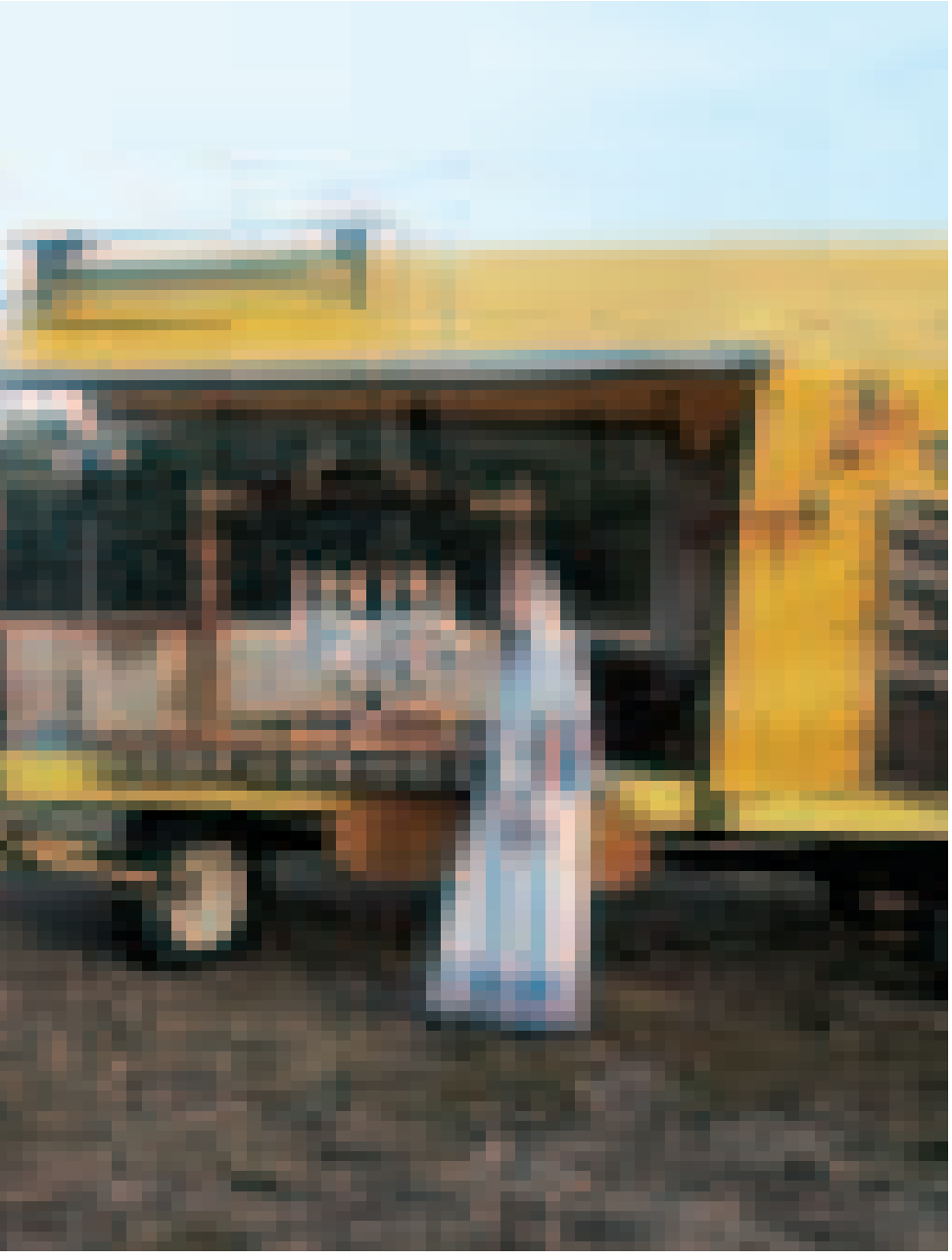
IT WAS JULY 2001, the hottest month of the year in India. I was on Padayātrā ("pilgrimage by foot"), walking toward Agra on the way to Vṛndāvana. During a break, the other devotees ate and the oxen drank water. I was sitting under a tree with His Holiness Lokanāth Swami, who oversees Padayātrās worldwide, and he suggested that I and my wife, Candrabhāga Devi Dāsī, perform a Padayātrā in America.

His words came as a surprise. We were happy in India, but it seemed Kṛṣṇa had other plans for us. But how would we fulfill them? We didn't have a clue.

By August we were in Washington, D.C., starting to develop the program. We faced skepticism from a few leaders, but Lokanāth Swami and Vīrabāhu Prabhu very caringly supported us. After a year of traveling everywhere on the East Coast and meeting with devotees, people on the street, and ISKCON's Indian congregation, we were ready to start building the wagon and training the horses. Following Lokanāth Swami's suggestion, we based our program at Gita Nagari, ISKCON's farm in Pennsylvania. There we were able to get help and encouragement from His Holiness Bhakti Tīrtha Swami, a great blessing for us.

We spent the fall and a cold winter at Gita Nagari. The devotees there, always eager to help, donated a wagon, which we modified for our needs. In May 2003, our Padayātrā deities—Śrī Śrī Nitāi-Gaurasundara (Caitanya and Nityānanda)—arrived from Māyāpur, India, and were installed by Bhakti





After traveling twelve hundred miles from Pennsylvania (above), Avadhūta Śiromaṇi Dāsa and Candrabhāga Devī Dāsī (left) spent the winter at the Hare Kṛṣṇa community in Alachua, Florida, before heading to Mexico. A solar panel on the roof of their cart generates electricity to continuously broadcast Śrīla Prabhupāda's chanting. At top, they mark another milestone: the North Carolina border.

Signs of Krsṇa's Blessings: Diary Excerpts

Maryland Mountains

We were crossing the mountains in Maryland, and after a long, hard journey, I could see that the horses were tired. With only about thirty minutes of sunlight left, I wanted to stop for the night at a farm. Till then, farmers had welcomed us, but when we tried this time, we were asked to move on. The road was very narrow, curvy, and hilly, and as the sun was setting, we kept going, with no place to stop. It was a dangerous situation. All we could do was pray.

After about a mile, the horses suddenly pulled into a small entrance in the middle of a curve. All I could see was a field and a narrow road. I walked to get a closer look, and I saw a sign: KRISHNA BHAGAVAN.

Up the road was an elegant house with beautiful gardens. It reminded me of a temple. I went to the door, and a woman named Gita answered—and the festival began. Gita has been familiar with Kṛṣṇa consciousness for thirty-five years. She welcomed us according to the high standard of Vedic culture, sincerely appreciating our arrival as the arrangement of the Lord. She fed the horses, gave us cloth and food supplies, accepted *prasādam,* donated money, bought books, invited neighbors, and arranged an interview with a local radio station. We felt overwhelmed that Nitāi-Gaurasundara had allowed us to take part in giving Their mercy to Gita by engaging her in Their service.

Lawrenceville, Virginia

With forty-five minutes of sunlight left, we were near the border of Virginia and North Carolina. We decide to try to cross the town and stop on the other side. But the town was bigger than we'd expected. A police officer made us move to a different road, and he escorted us for a few blocks before stopping us again. As Candrabhāga ran to get some milk and I got water for the horses, the police officer came up to look at the horses and then the deities. He cheerfully told me that if we just went four miles farther, we'd find a place for the night. I laughed to myself. He obviously didn't know how slowly we move. It would take us more than an hour to go four miles, and by now there were only about fifteen minutes of sunlight left.

Just then a girl pulled up. She had been seeing us for the last three days and invited us to stay in her yard, one block away.

As usual, a festival began, with many people showing up, fascinated by the Padayātrā. Police officers came by at intervals and let the locals know we were good people. A reporter came, and a nice article ran in the local paper the next day. When we moved on, we left behind new friends in Lawranceville, Virginia.

Devotee at the Potomac

We were about to cross the Potomac River in Maryland, but we discovered that the bridge was too small for us. A man invited us to stay at his place and gave us directions for another route across the river. As we were traveling in an isolated area, a woman shouted to us, "Hare Kṛṣṇa! My son is a Hare Kṛṣṇa!"

Her son, Jai Nitaī Dāsa, had just arrived at her house an hour earlier. We spent a wonderful evening with him, relating stories of our travels.

The next day, we discovered another reason why the Lord had detained us: One of the wooden wheels of the wagon was broken, and we needed someone with great patience to help us get it fixed. Jai Nitāi Dāsa spent four days helping us with the task, driving here and there. We discovered the truth in the saying that with one action, Kṛṣṇa fulfills many objectives.

Walterboro, South Carolina

We were leaving Walterboro, South Carolina, headed to Yemassee. The holy name resounded from our speakers as the traffic moved slowly.

Suddenly Reverend Bale, a Christian pastor with a big smile, rushed up to us. He was fascinated by our mission and our simple style of glorifying God.

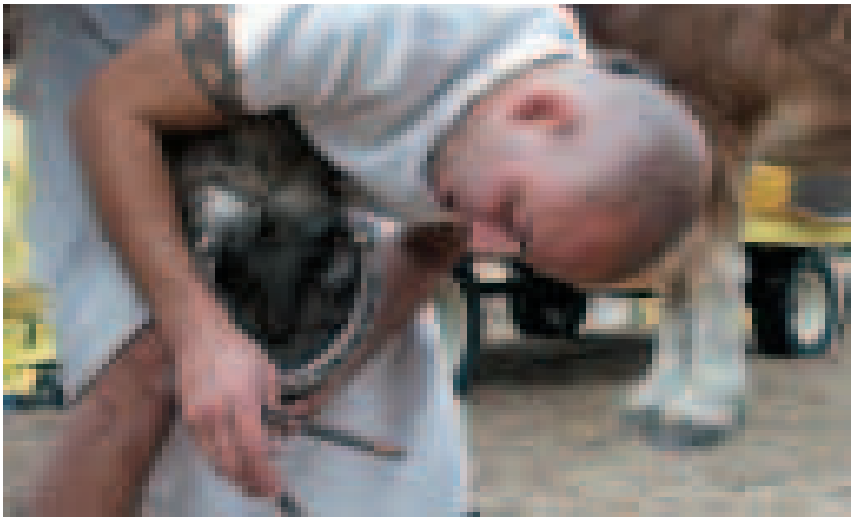
He looked at the deities and said sincerely, "Thank you for bringing this to us."

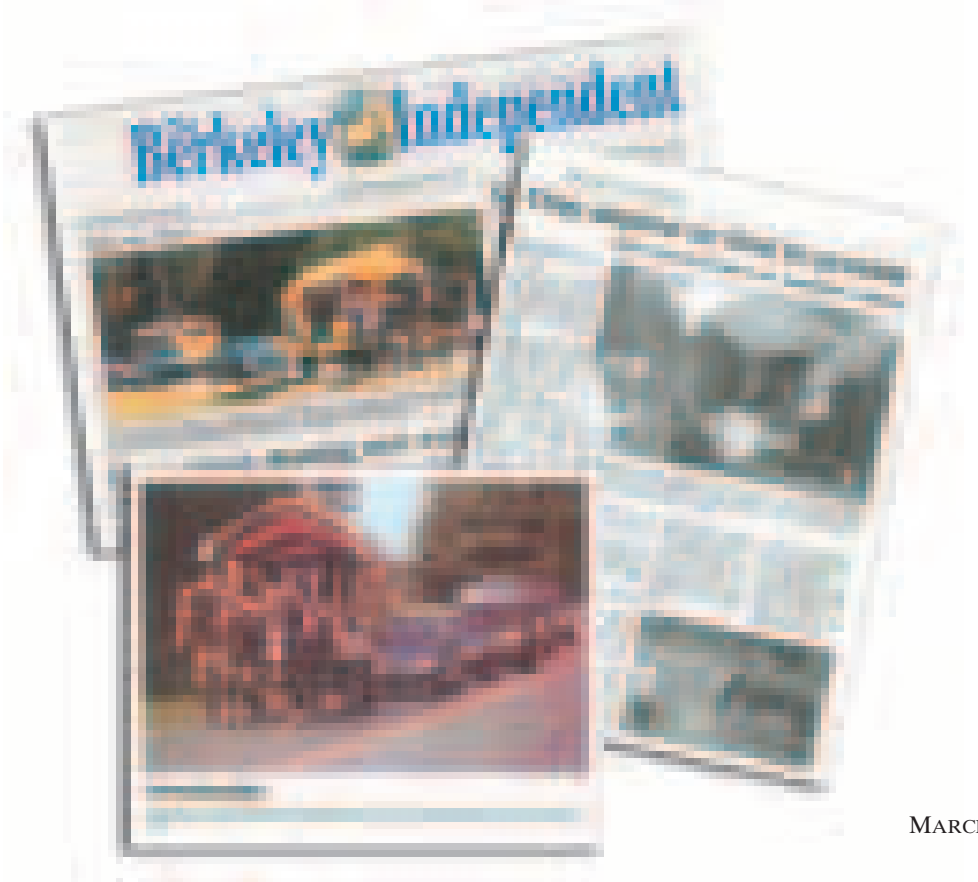
He offered to help, and when I said we needed hay for the horses, he said, "Let me see what I can do. I'll come back later."

At that moment a big truck full of hay was crossing the highway. The white-haired Reverend Bale, dressed in a suit, ran onto the highway and stopped the truck. He procured a donation of hay and was overcome with happiness. He jumped and raised his arms and shouted, "God is good!"

After a pleasant conversation, he seemed very sincerely and strongly moved. He left with a deluxe copy of *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is.*

The deities of the Padayātrā traveling temple (left): Śrī Śrī Nitāi-Gaurasundara, Lord Nṛsiṁhadeva, and Śrīla Prabhupāda. Avadhūta Śiromaṇi (below) has learned the difficult art of shoeing horses. Bottom: a sample of the abundant news coverage.





Tīrtha Swami, the event attended by 250 devotees.

The wagon was finished, the horses trained, the deities installed, the maps collected, the route chosen, the information about the permits collected, the kitchen set up, and the books and a few dhotis and saris packed. We were ready. But we weren't sure what to expect as we pulled away from Gita Nagari and started down Highway 75 toward Maryland. We didn't have money to survive for more than a few days. How would we be received in a country where material pursuits predominate? Where would we stay tonight? Bhakti Tīrtha Swami's last words to us resounded in our ears: "Depend on Kṛṣṇa. He'll take care of you."

From the day we left Gita Nagari until our arrival at New Ramana Reti in Alachua, Florida, twelve hundred miles later, Kṛṣṇa did indeed take care of everything. People of all ages and backgrounds came like ants to sugar. They inquired from us and heard our message of love, in which we encouraged everyone to glorify God by chanting His names. We told them that only by understanding our personal relationship with God, which is based on love, can we find happiness and satisfaction. Inspired to help, people brought hay, water, clothing, money, food supplies, and food for the horses. Often, as in Vedic times, they placed their gifts before the deities.

Thousands of people came in contact with the Padayātrā. Whoever came went away with some mercy of Śrī Śrī Nitāi-Gaurasundara—books, *prasādam,* the holy name, a viewing of the deities, or the opportunity to render some devotional service. The American people were inspired by our simple example of glorifying God by living a life of dependence on Him. Many people phoned their local newspapers, which responded with accurate articles and often a photo of Nitāi-Gaurasundara on the front page.

Our Dedicated Horses

For walking in America, horses have some advantages over oxen. They can tolerate the hot weather better than American breeds of oxen, and they can be shoed (by standing on three legs),

The Padayātrā team pulls onto the highway in Kingstree, South Carolina (above). At right, Candrabhāga explains the Padayātrā mission to a friendly local who arrived with an offering of food supplies.

Appreciations from Online

It is so impressive how you and your wife are such ideal dedicated devotees. You really had a big impact on the devotees in Gita Nagari, especially myself, so please keep up the good work. You both represent your spiritual masters very well.

—Bhakti Tīrtha Swami

Padayātrā America has achieved a lot of good will and has made many good contacts. The credit goes to the team leaders of Padayātrā America. Avadhūta Śiromaṇi pushed Padayātrā with great determination despite various obstacles on his path.

—Lokanāth Swami

Things don't happen automatically. What is required is for a devotee to become an instrument for making programs happen. Your service will be rewarded unlimitedly.—*Vīrabāhu Dāsa*

I am truly inspired by your efforts to send out the word of God all over America. I had the blessing of sighting the Padayātrā today and received your words of love, hope, and peace. I admire your courage in that I always fantasize about doing something like that but don't have the desperation of force behind me to follow through. So the best I could do was give food and a small donation. I'm praying for your mission —that God may continually send power for your lips and peace to your soul.

—Paula Easter
North Carolina

We have been extremely honored and blessed by getting to know our new friends Avadhūta and Candrabhāga. These two ambassadors of Kṛṣṇa have truly touched our lives. They have exhibited amazing humility, patience, and grace. Our lives have been enriched through our experience with Padayātrā. We will always keep them and their mission in our thoughts and prayers.

—Lee Ann and Michael C. Farley
Virginia

I love reading your diary entries and learning about the progress of the Padayātrā. I check your web site every day. Very nice, especially how people are receiving you. It is a very, very nice arrangement of the Lord. I pray for your health, strength, and continuous enthusiasm for this most amazing mission you have taken on. Hare

essential for walking all day on asphalt.

Kana and Balaji, eight and nine years old, are our team of horses. They are Padayātrā's ambassadors, attracting people to Nitāi-Gaurasundara with their beauty and massive size—two thousand pounds each. They're also worthy of praise for their dedicated service of pulling the wagon, which carries everything, day after day in temperatures ranging from thirty-five to over a hundred degrees Fahrenheit. They press on despite the challenges of wind, water, rain, trains, fire trucks, police cars, ambulances, tractor trailers, big cities, army training fields, mountains, or sandy beaches. They're always steady, patient, ready to work.

We see these strong-willed horses as devotees who have become trusting of us and would rather die than break the relationship we have established on the basis of love and respect. Balaji and Kana have shown an incredible ability to adapt to any circumstance. And the more they perform service, the more they eat *prasādam*, and the more they hear the holy name, the more refined their minds become.

Life on Padayātrā

All of our time on Padayātrā is used for presenting Kṛṣṇa consciousness. We walk, we stop, we walk, we stop—without privacy. People come when we're cooking, worshiping the deities, or taking care of the horses, and we extend ourselves to whoever is ready to receive the Lord's mercy. To live on Padayātrā is to feel how sweet it is to let Kṛṣṇa take care of us. It brings us back to the state of consciousness in which we become satisfied with whatever Kṛṣṇa provides, in which the taste of glorifying Him is always increasing, and in which the material attachments of life seem to naturally go away.

Padayātrā life is like being on a transcendental ship that travels along the ocean of illusion helping people realize the importance of surrender by learning how to love God. It is an adventure with all kinds of situations, some dangerous. We feel like pioneers facing challenges and difficulties that provide opportunities to reciprocate with the Lord in a very personal way.

Avadhūta Śiromaṇi Dāsa was born in the United States and raised in Columbia, South America. A disciple of His Grace Vīrabāhu Dāsa, he joined ISKCON in Los Angeles in 1995.

Candrabhāga Devī Dāsī, a disciple of His Holiness Lokanāth Swami, is originally from New York. She joined ISKCON in Denver in 1997.

Author's note: I would like to thank Candrabhāga Dāsī, my wife, for her constant support during the Padayātrā. She is always enthusiastic to perform any service—cooking, deity worship, communication, diary editing, care of the horses, distribution of literature. She has shown a mature attraction for serving guru and Kṛṣṇa, accepting with pleasure a way of life that lacks material comforts. She displays the conviction that our only shelter, our only beloved, is Lord Kṛṣṇa.

For information about Padayātrā America's next trek, from Alachua, Florida, to the Mexican border, visit padayatraamerica.com or send an email to padayatra@earthlink.net

"TO KNOW GOD"

(*continued from page 43*)

God—he is called a *brāhmaṇa*. Therefore, the culmination of education is to understand God. That is education. Otherwise, to get education about how to nicely eat, how to nicely sleep, how to nicely have sex life, and how to defend—this education is there even in the animals. The animals, also—they know how to eat, how to sleep, how to have sex life, and how to defend.

Mother: Yes. It seems to worry you—this sex life. I mean… we don't take…

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No, no, no. I'm not worried.

Mother: …any notice if… It fits into its place.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: This is also necessary. This is also necessary. But these four types of branches of education are not sufficient for a human being. A human being—above all this education, he must have the knowledge of how to love God. And that is the perfection of life.

Mother: Yeah. Well, Michael was taught that when he was very small. The Jesuits saw to that.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Knowing how to love God—that is perfection.

Mother: The Jesuits certainly did.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: So to understand how to love God, there must be a religious system. In every civilized human society—it doesn't matter whether the system is Christianity or Hinduism or Muhammadanism or Buddhism—the religious system is there, along with the education about eating, sleeping, mating, and defending. That other education is there in the animal society. So a human being is distinct from the animal when he has education about how to understand God and how to love Him. That is perfection.

So that is now wanting. Our Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is not depriving people of their education. You get education about how to eat, how to sleep, and that's all right. But side by side, you take education about how to know God and how to love Him. That is our proposition.

Mother: Yes. I agree with you.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes.

Mother: Yes, I agree with you every time.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: We don't say that you stop all this education. No.

Mother: No, I don't agree with you there. No, Father. No, no. No, no.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: We don't say.

Mother: No, I think these young men here must…

Śrīla Prabhupāda: You can go on with your industries. You can go on with your university. But side by side, you become competent to know what is the nature of God and how to love Him. Then your life is perfect.

Mother: I could mention a lot of persons that are still very close to God and brilliant men in science. Where would we be without our scientists, without our doctors, medicine? They all have to go to university and get a degree before they…

Śrīla Prabhupāda: That I say. You get a degree.

Mother: Yes, but we need them.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: You get.

Mother: Yes. Well, the some of your boys could be doctors.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: But simply becoming a doctor of medical science will not save me. Unfortunately, these men do not believe in the next life.

Mother: Oh, yes they do. I go to…I had a doctor who came to church—and Michael knows him—every Sunday. A very good man.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Mostly. I have spoken with many educated persons. In Moscow I was talking with Professor Kotofsky. He said, "Swamiji, after this body is finished, everything is finished." But he's a big professor. Generally, even if they do believe in the next life, they do not believe in it very seriously. If we actually believe there is a next life, then we must be prepared: "What kind of next life am I going to have?"

Mother: Yes. Well, Father…

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Because there are 8,400,000 forms of life. The trees are also forms of life. The cats and dogs—they are also forms of life. And there are higher, more intelligent persons in the higher planetary systems. They are also forms of life. The worm in the stool—that is also a form of life. So, calculating all of them, there are 8,400,000 species of life. So I am going to have a next life. *Tathā dehāntara-prāptiḥ*—we have to change out of this body and go to another body. So our concern should be, "What kind of body am I going to get next?"

Mother: I agree for some people to—you especially—to think of this, because you are a leader of your Vedic religion. But for everybody to do that—where would we be? We couldn't all sit down and think all the time.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: But where is that education?

Mother: But we… you can also work and think.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No. We work. I mean to say, where is that education in the university to prepare the student for the next life?

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KṚṢṆA'S MESSAGE

(*continued from page 9*)

spoke the truth about *Bhagavad-gītā* to Manu." I have already mentioned the name of Manu. Manu means the father of mankind. That means that from the sun planet, the message of *Bhagavad-gītā* was handed down to the chief man of this planet, the father of mankind, Manu. And Manu handed over this knowledge to his son named Ikṣvāku.

Ikṣvāku is a great king. He happens to be the original king in the family in which Lord Rāmacandra appeared. It is called *sūrya-vaṁśa,* the descendants from the sun. There are two classes of *kṣatriyas,* or rulers. One is coming from the sun planet, and the other is coming down from the moon planet. According to the *Mahābhārata,* those of Indo-European stock also belong to the *kṣatriya* family.

Kṛṣṇa says in the next verse, *evaṁ paramparā-prāptam imaṁ rājarṣayo viduḥ* [Bg. 4.2]. In this way, this knowledge was received by disciplic succession of *rājarṣis. Rājarṣi* means a monarch who is just like a sage. In the history given in the *Mahābhārata* there were many kings who were like sages. In name they were monarchs, but they were always thinking of the welfare of the citizens. Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira is an example.

Then Kṛṣṇa says, *sa kāleneha . . . yogo naṣṭaḥ parantapa* [Bg. 4.2]: "Now this *paramparā* system, or disciplic suc-cession, has been broken by the influence of time." Just imagine. It was com-ing down from the sun planet, so there is every possibility of that occurring. Suppose I hand over some knowledge to you and you hand over to some other person, in succession. There is the possibility that there may be some deviation from the exact knowledge I delivered at the beginning. That is called the breakage of the *paramparā* system. Kṛṣṇa says, "That *paramparā* system, by the force of time, is now broken; therefore I again begin that *paramparā* system with you, Arjuna."

Therefore if we understand the *Bhagavad-gītā* as it was understood by Arjuna, then we get real knowledge. That is the way to understand *paramparā.* Although we are not present before Kṛṣṇa, if the message of Kṛṣṇa is received through the *paramparā* system as it was understood by Arjuna, then we get the message from Kṛṣṇa directly. This is the system. But if I interpret in my own way, then the *paramparā* system is broken.

I gave an account of our *paramparā* system from Lord Caitanya. We do not manufacture any knowledge by our fertile brain. We accept knowledge as it is coming down from the supreme authority. That is perfect knowledge. For example, we receive knowledge from our parents: "This is called a lamp, this is called a table, this is called a book." If you protest, "Why shall I call it a book? I may call it something else"—you can do that, but that is a deviation from the knowledge.

The *paramparā* system is considered the perfect system of knowledge. I may be imperfect or my disciple may be imperfect, but if we stick to the knowledge coming down from the *paramparā* system, then we are perfect.

This is such a simple, nice thing. The parent teaches the child, "This is called a watch or a timepiece." If he accepts it, he hasn't got to make any research—"Why is it called a timepiece?" It is a very easy system. "My father has told me this is a timepiece. I accept it as a timepiece," and everyone will understand that this is a timepiece. But if I manufacture some name out of my fertile brain—"This is this"—oh, people will call me crazy. "What are you saying?" So the *paramparā* system is very nice.

Take the phrase "Man is mortal." You have learned from your parents or teachers that man is mortal. Now, if you want to research whether or not man is mortal, it will take a long, long time. But if you accept it from the authorities—"Man is mortal"—your knowledge is perfect.

The *paramparā* system of knowledge is given in the *Vedas.* This system of knowledge is followed by the great *ācāryas,* and Prahlāda Mahārāja is one of the great *ācāryas.*

PRAHLĀDA'S ADVICE

Try to accept what Prahlāda Mahārāja is advising to his classmates. What is he advising? *Kaumāra ācaret prājño dharmān bhāgavatān iha* [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.6.1]: "My dear friends, Kṛṣṇa consciousness should be practiced from childhood." Why childhood? Because if one is intelligent he can understand, "There is no certainty whether this is my childhood or my old age."

Generally we think that we die when we are old. But who can say that I'm not old enough to die in the next moment? If I have to gain something supernatural which will give me the ultimate benefit of my life, then why shall I wait for old age? Immediately let me begin. If Kṛṣṇa consciousness is a very nice thing, and if it will give me the highest benediction of life, then if I am intelligent I must begin it immediately, without any delay. But generally people think that childhood or youth should be enjoyed.

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In one verse, Śaṅkarācārya laments that boys, youths, and old man are very happy in their materialistic way of life. A spiritualist like Śaṅkarācārya, or Lord Jesus Christ, is unhappy, "Oh, what foolish things are they doing." That is the thankless task of persons who are spiritually enlightened. They can see plainly how others are spoiling their valuable life simply for sense gratification.

Prahlāda Mahārāja is teaching the same thing. He says that one should practice *dharmān bhāgavatān* from the beginning of life. Dharma means occupational duty. "Religion" is not a perfect translation of the Sanskrit word *dharma.* Religion is a kind of faith. That we can change. But dharma means your occupational duty, which you cannot change. You have to execute it. What is our dharma? What is our compulsory duty? I have several times analyzed this fact. Our compulsory duty is to serve. Every one of us is serving, and all the boys and girls present here can know it. Nobody can deny that he or she is serving. Everyone is serving. That is our compulsory duty. I may change myself to become a Mohammedan or a Christian or a Hindu, but my real occupational duty is to render service to others. That cannot be changed. That is the real enunciation of "religion."

Therefore in the Vedic system it is called *sanātana-dharma,* the eternal occupational duty you cannot cease. Prahlāda Mahārāja is advising, *dharmān bhāgavatān. Bhāgavata* means "pertaining to Bhagavān." And Bhagavān means the Supreme Personality of Godhead. *Bhāgavata* is the adjective form of the noun Bhagavān. The real form of the word is *bhagavat. Vat* means possessing, and *bhaga* means opulences. One who possess all the opulences is called *bhagavat.* And from *bhagavat* this word has come: *bhāgavata.*

So *bhāgavata* means pertaining to God and His devotees. This book is called *Bhāgavata* because it deals only with the subject of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, nothing more. And you'll find described in this book the dealings between Bhagavān, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and His devotees. There are two kinds of *bhāgavatam:* the devotee *bhāgavatam* and the book *Bhāgavatam.* Prahlāda Mahārāja advises that from childhood, if one is very intelligent, then his duty is *dharmān bhāgavatān*—he should engage himself in the execution of the occupational duties in relationship with devotees and the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Thank you very much.

THE SILVER LINING

(*continued from page 30*)

devotees. So simple, so pure, so honest, so real—unlike anything we can find among ourselves in the material world.

Another example of unfaltering faith is Kuntī, who after the death of her grandsons approached Lord Kṛṣṇa and asked Him to please continue to put her through distress and hardship, because it was in those times that she thought of Him the most. That is the sign of a pure devotee.

A pure devotee looks at misfortune as bad karma being exhausted. A devotee thinks that Kṛṣṇa is lessening his sinful reactions. A devotee realizes that during the most difficult times, Kṛṣṇa within is guiding and protecting him. He realizes that his hardships are simply the Lord trying to keep His child close to Him, trying to encourage him to remember Him.

I understand that suffering comes because of karma, or things we've done in the past. And I understand that karma exists because we have free will, which Kṛṣṇa has given us so we can freely choose to love Him. Still, I can't explain exactly why a particular thing happens. I don't know why that man killed his children. I don't know why that driver fled the scene after striking that couple. I don't know why that poor baby's mother left him to die.

But I do know that Kṛṣṇa has a plan for all of us. I do know that He loves all of us equally; He is impartial, like a father who doesn't favor any one child. Still, Kṛṣṇa reciprocates loving transactions with us proportionately to what we offer. Chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa will burn all of our good and bad karma, the causes of bondage to the material world.

MAXIMUM PROTECTION

A devotee once suggested to me that because the world is filled with exploitation and deceit, for maximum protection one should try to chant sixteen rounds every morning before leaving home. He said that if I did that, I'd develop an aura, almost a shield, that would bar people from hurting me. Minimum sixteen rounds each day for maximum protection.

The *mahā-mantra* is so powerful. It is Kṛṣṇa Himself incarnating as His name, and we directly associate with the Lord while chanting. We are awakening our dormant love for Him beneath the dust of the mirror of our hearts. It's simple: Unfortunate circumstances will ensue, we won't always understand what Kṛṣṇa's plan is, but chanting, reading, and associating with devotees will virtually, if not completely, remove our pain. These practices will cause us to view our suffering in a different light, just as the *gopīs* did, just as Kuntī did, as Prahlāda Mahārāja did, and as Śrīmatī Subhadrā did.

Raise your hands and rejoice in the power and beauty of the Lord's sweet names: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare!

And that's what I do as I look at the photo Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa this morning.

"Ahem!"

That's my mum. She has just rounded the corner and is peering at me, clearly wondering what exactly I'm doing, and if I'll be in need of medication.

"Were you just talking to yourself?"

"Oh. Hi mum. I . . . uh . . . well, emmm . . . Stop talking to me—I'm late! Bye!"

And with that, I once again venture into the cut-throat corporate world. But I feel safer. I feel protected. I feel the warmth of Kṛṣṇa in my heart. I can deal with anything today.

Rashi Singh graduated with an honors degree in marketing from the Schulich School of Business at York University. She lives in Toronto, Canada.

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Seven Benefits of Chanting

ON ENCOUNTERING Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees chanting on the street, people respond with every reaction from amusement to anger. Few understand what the chanting is all about. To many, it seems a frivolity, often inspiring the remark "Get a job!"

But there's nothing frivolous about chanting the names of God. Śrīla Prabhupāda had great faith in the transformative power of chanting. He told us that simply by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa we would become self-realized. He spoke from experience and on the basis of the teachings of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who emphasized chanting as the most effective means of God-realization in the present age.

Prabhupāda saw his disciples mature spiritually by chanting. And he stressed that if we continued to chant sincerely, we would attain spiritual perfection.

In the *Śikṣāṣṭaka,* or "Eight Teachings," Lord Caitanya Himself listed seven spiritual benefits of chanting:

• **Chanting cleans the mirror of the heart.** Lord Caitanya compares the heart, or the consciousness, to a mirror in which one sees oneself. The dust of lifetimes of material pursuits sullies our consciousness, blocking a clear vision of our true identity as spiritual beings. Chanting the holy names washes away that dust, allowing us to finally see who we really are.

• **Chanting puts out the fire of material existence.** We think we're the body, and that brings on limitless sufferings, chief of which are disease, old age, death, and rebirth. Because chanting awakens our true identity, it delivers us from repeated lifetimes of misery at the hands of nature.

• **Chanting is like a moon, spreading good fortune.** Even in the early stages of practice, a chanter feels the lightening of a great burden. Because God and His names are identical, the blessings invoked by chanting are incalculable.

• **Chanting is the life of all knowledge.** Without spiritual knowledge, we eternal beings are doomed to stay in this temporary place where we can never be fully satisfied. The essence of spiritual knowledge is to know our eternal relationship with Kṛṣṇa. By removing the material covering, chanting awakens that knowledge, which lies dormant within us.

• **Chanting expands the ocean of transcendental happiness.** Any spiritual happiness is far beyond anything attainable through material endeavors, but the highest spiritual pleasure comes from our relationship with Kṛṣṇa. As the purity of our chanting increases, so does our love for Kṛṣṇa, the key to an ever-deepening relationship with Him. Lord Caitanya gives the example of an ocean to show the amount of happiness that awaits us—even an ordinary ocean isn't big enough to hold it; an ever-expanding ocean is needed.

• **Chanting lets us taste the nectar of happiness at every step.** We eventually become satiated by any kind of material pleasure, but the spiritual happiness unlocked by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa is always new and fresh.

• **Chanting bathes us in full satisfaction.** Restoring our long-lost relationship with Kṛṣṇa fully soothes the soul.

Lord Kṛṣṇa longs for us to return to Him, and our heartfelt plea spoken in the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* is just what He wants to hear.

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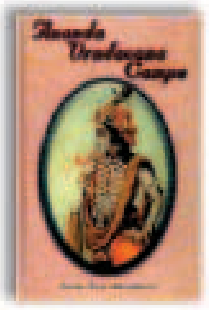

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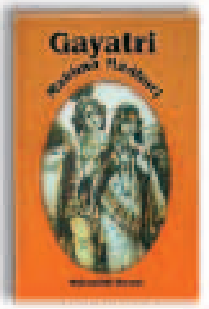

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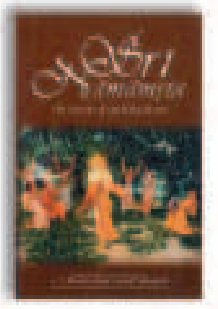

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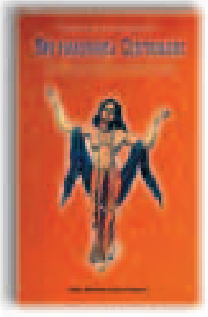

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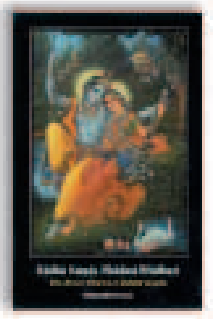

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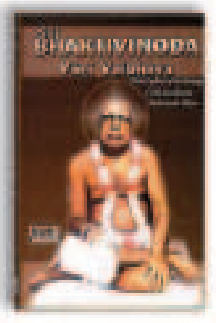

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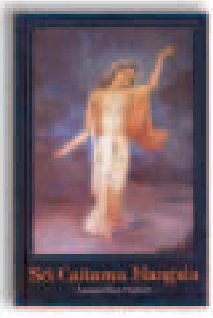

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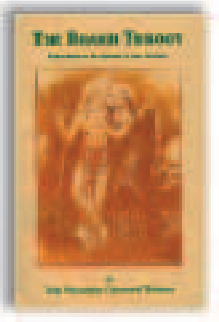

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If you have this faith—that the soul is the eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa—then you will have no more misery and when you chant the holy name of Kṛṣṇa, your body will shiver in ecstasy and your eyes will shed tears in love of God.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura
Gītāvalī

◆

If somehow or other by good fortune one develops faith in hearing and chanting My glories, such a person, being neither very disgusted with nor attached to material life, should achieve perfection through the path of loving devotion to Me.

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.20.8

◆

Even a liberated soul merged in the impersonal Brahman effulgence is attracted to the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa. He thus installs a deity and renders the Lord service.

Śrī Śaṅkarācārya
Commentary on
Nṛsiṁha-tāpanī Upaniṣad

◆

The Vedic literatures composed by the omniscient Mahāmuni Vyāsadeva are evidence of all spiritual existence. Only through these revealed scriptures can all conditioned souls attain knowledge.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya 20.353

Because of His great handsomeness, sweetness, charm, and opulence, because of the musical sound of His flute, because He is filled with love, and because of His host of friends and relatives, great poets and philosophers say that Lord Kṛṣṇa, the son of Mahārāja Nanda, is the original Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa
Śri Aiśvarya-kadambini 1.10

◆

To the extent the heart is polluted with sins, it cannot place its faith in the Vedic scriptures or the bona fide spiritual master. By hearing the Vedic scriptures in the association of saintly devotees, love for the Lord is manifest. That is the great result of having performed many pious deeds in many previous births.

Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa
Quoted in *Bhakti-sandarbha* (1.5–6)

◆

Not knowing the real value of life, people think that the material body and the land where it is produced are all in all. This is the basic principle behind nationalism, socialism, and communism. Such thinking, which simply bewilders the living entity, is nothing but rascalism. It is due to the darkness of *māyā,* but as soon as one becomes Kṛṣṇa conscious, he is immediately relieved from such misconceptions.

His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta
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Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya 22.32, Purport

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